

T H E

COUNT DE POLAND.

N FOUR VOLUMES.

T H E
COUNT DE POLAND,

B Y
MISS M. MINIFIE,

ONE OF THE AUTHORS OF

Lady Frances and Lady Caroline S—

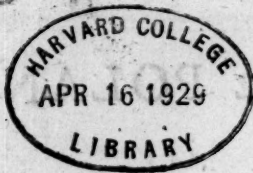
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MISS M. MINIFIE

ONE OF THE AUTHORS OF

THE FARMER AND THE COUNTRY

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THE
COUNT DE POLAND.

LETTER XVIII.

COUNT DE POLAND IN CONTINUATION.

IN consequence of that *sacred* vow
I had taken in the presence of
God, and my dear departed Saint,
I immediately wrote to the Duke
de Oboyne—I acquainted him with
her death—I spoke as much of the
deplorable situation in which I dis-
covered her, as I thought neces-
sary to *reach* his heart, and awaken
him to repentance for the share *he*

had in her distresses. My reflections were not severe, but they reached his heart as I intended. It was many years before he recovered his former cheerfulness—her memory became dear to him—he has shed a thousand tears in my presence—he was never tired with heaping reproaches on himself for the unbrotherly treatment that *drove* her from our protection. The severity of his own accusations silenced my upbraidings ; I could not add them to what he already suffered ; I endeavoured, on the contrary, to soften his feelings of remorse. I was for his own sake charmed with the change in his disposition, and re-
stored

stored him to all that tender affection which by *one* act of cruel injustice he had before forfeited. His wife, as she had partaken of his crime, partook also of his penitence. At *first*, her presence was hateful to me; but her unremitting endeavours to soothe my sorrows, and convince me of her contrition, had the usual effect on my soul; I could no longer refuse my *esteem*, where no means were neglected to engage it. On the most friendly terms, I lived with my brother and his family twelve years after the death of *Maria*; but I *must* now go back, and explain to you the cause that a second time interrupted the
harmony

harmony which reigned among us, never—*never* to be revived.

To keep the *trust* reposed in me not only secret from the Duke and his Duchesse, but also from the prying curiosity of *common* spectators, who could have no interest in our concerns, I took the following precautions before I returned with the *body* to France. The first thing I did was, to give the name of *Annanette*, instead of *De Poland*, to the lovely child of my *adoption*. I have told you, that when I saw the good woman, who had a real claim to *that* name giving me the most moving proofs of her love and attachment to *my* infant,

infant, a sudden design formed itself in my imaginations. This design was no other than to make *her* pass for her parent, which would take off all suspicion of my sister's being her *true* mother; and the more I examined the propriety of this artifice, the more I approved it.

Annanette was the daughter of a favourite servant my mother brought with her from England, who, having married in France, on her death-bed recommended this girl to the patronage of the Ducheſs. *Annanette* was but little older than my sister, when her mother died, from which time she was taken into the
same

same nursery, where she received in common those instructions that were liberally bestowed on the mind and education of her young lady. Like her too she was a Protestant, and too faithful to forsake the fortunes of her mistress, even in their blackest aspect. Her accomplishments were such as would have fitted her for the superintendence of children, whose improvement in polite acquirements might have been the first object of a parent's care, nor was she less qualified to teach the more unmodern lessons of morality and honour, which, in the judgment of *thinking* people, are still *more* estimable. It is in *education*, as it is
in

in *life*—many things are useful—many more we call necessary; but *few* only are *absolutely* essential.

Convinced that my utmost researches would never lead me to the discovery of a person more properly qualified for the governess of my dear infant, I did not hesitate to confer on her a still more interesting title. I knew it was an indulgent trust, and confidence I could safely repose in her—I knew she would abuse *neither*. Assured she would preserve the character of a *mother*, without forgetting her station of a *servant*, I delayed not to signify my intention. The manner in which she

she accepted this important charge made me applaud the resolution I had taken in her favour—sensibility, joy, and gratitude, were the *only* emotions she betrayed. It is easily perceived, by the eye of observation, from whence the passions derive their source. I was pleased to see that in her they sprung not from the adulterated fountain of self-interest, but from the genuine friendship she entertained for her *late* lady, as well as from an unbounded affection for my *little* darling. She was not exalted in her own opinion; it was the prospect of never being separated from that dear child which sent out her expressions of transport
with

with so great velocity, as almost over-powered me by their force—I silently blessed Heaven for directing my choice, and turned away to prevent being further oppressed by this grateful creature's acknowledgments.

Having *now* settled every thing with *Annanette*, I took a lodging for her far removed from the house I had hired before; and making a considerable present to the poor woman who had hitherto nursed my beloved charge privately, removed *Annette* and the little one to their new habitation. I would have got another nurse, to supply the place of her, whom fear of having my scheme

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detected, had forced me to dismiss; but the fictitious mother assuring me, it was the custom to wean children of her age, and that *Mademoiselle* was so healthy, that she would answer with her life for the consequences—I submitted to her opinion.

The lodgings to which I conveyed them were neat and convenient. I allowed her two women servants and a footman, which she was to provide in her own name, or rather the name of *Arlington*; which, by my orders, she had assumed, and by which I shall for the future distinguish her, as you will, in the remainder of my relation, know my own dear child by that of *Annanette*.

My

My motives for this *finesse* must be obvious—in giving her the name of her supposed mother, which name was familiar to the ear of my brother, I entirely excluded him from suspicion, and forwarded a deception innocent in its design, and by circumstances rendered unavoidable. After having settled my little family, the mistress of which was to pass for a widow of genteel fortune, I embarked, with the remains of my dearest sister, for her native country. Oh, Sir *William*! Oh, Lady *Edgerton*! I was the sincerest mourner that ever followed virtues like her's towards the dreary sepulchre—that cold inhospitable mansion, which incloses the brightest perfections with

the same indifference as it does the wretched carcase stained with crimes and defaced by vicious pursuits.— The *Duke de Oboyne* had written to request the body might be brought to his palace, which I thought it improper to oppose, seeing the distracted state of his mind when he signified his inclinations.

Permit me to draw a veil over this part of my narrative: ill as he has since requited my tenderness, I cannot even now reflect on the agonies I saw him suffer at our solemn entrance, without being too much softened for a brother whom my own wrongs tell me I ought to throw from my affection. It will
not

not be—I have a something in my nature repugnant to hate—I cannot hate the *Duke de Oboyne*—but I will fly from him—I will avoid him as the declared enemy of my repose.

My *Maria*'s ashes were deposited in the tomb of her ancestors; they were deposited in all the ostentatious pomp of funeral magnificence; my brother directed it; he thought he could not be too profuse. Alas! why this profuseness? why those immense sums squandered to carry that poor body back to its parent earth, which, when living, was suffered to pine in misery, to languish in neglect, and, last of all, to resign its being to the resistless claim of
C 3 poverty?

poverty? Not long after her interment, when I could venture to speak on the subject, without dread of seeing the Duke relapse into those terrors of conscience which had alarmed me for his senses, as soon as I saw him tolerably composed, I spoke to him of the great obligations my sister owed, before and during her illness, to *Annanette*. I told him she was now the widow of a private English gentleman; that she was left in narrow circumstances, with a child to maintain; and, at the same time, declared my intentions of sending for them to France, that I might have an opportunity of returning some of those vast debts of kindness the worthy creature had,

had, to the utmost of a very limited power, communicated to her unfortunate mistress; adding, that every mark of favour I could bestow on Mrs. *Arlington*, or her infant, I should always consider as a recompense inadequate to her unparalleled fidelity. He heard me with more composure than I had reason to expect. You have a noble mind, my dear Count, said he—I adore your goodness; then catching my hand, and grasping it with fervour, you must not (continued he) refuse me the comfort of sharing with you in rewarding this friend of our dearest *Maria*. Oh, my sister! my sister! (he exclaimed,) with my whole fortune would I purchase the remembrance

brance of one—one single act of tenderness administered to thee in the season of thy adversity—*De Poland* and *Annanette*, of all thy numerous friends and followers, are those only who can cherish thy idea without remorse, without terror. He groaned as he said this; then turning to the Duchess,—tell me, I charge you, Madam, why this dear sister, this amiable sufferer, was driven from her paternal habitation, which should have been her sanctuary against misfortune. His wife was incapable of answering a question so unexpected; she burst into tears, and retired hastily, to avoid the angry glances with which he sternly saluted her. I interposed; I happily convinced him

his

his resentment was unseasonable; he heard me with patience, and at length condescended to follow the Duchess. I was soon after desired to join them in her dressing-room; they had both been in tears; but nothing like reproach any more escaped his lips. She sent out a look which conveyed to me her thanks for the part I had acted, and told me, in a whisper, she would give the world to be more worthy of my friendship.

We now renewed our former conversation, when the Duke persisted in his resolution of joining in the support of Mrs. *Arlington* and her infant. I did not think proper to exasperate

exasperate him, by refusing absolutely what he insisted on with a warmth so peremptory. I mentioned a trifling yearly allowance, which terms, with the utmost difficulty, I at last prevailed on him to accept, though, at the same time, he declared his gratitude should never be confined to so narrow a compass. My principal reasons for giving him any hand in this affair, were these: first, not to disoblige him; secondly, by allowing him to assist me in the support of *Arlington*, I secured my plan from detection; I also raised my brother's character, by laying in his way an opportunity to obliterate, by his goodness to the favourite servant of his neglected sister,

sister, the aspersions by which it had been marked on her account,—and last, not least of all, the honour this public countenance of her well-remembered domestic would reflect on the memory of my ever-loved, ever-regretted *Maria*.

My meaning was not to keep him ignorant of the young *De Poland's* being his niece, longer than till I had seen her established in the world, established under the protection of a husband, who would openly defend her in those privileges which I was forced to maintain by stealth and by contrivance. I argued with myself in this manner—though I conceal her birth from the Duke,
he

he will not be debarred her conversation; nature, no doubt, will find her way to his heart long before it is proper to inform him of the near relation that intitles her to his affection.

I looked forward with pleasure when I should be at liberty to divulge my secret, to present him with a niece, who, if she inherited half her mother's virtues, would be an honour to his family. My sister's command of silence extended no further than to the infant state of her daughter; I thought the Duke so truly sensible of his error, so truly penitent for its consequences, that I had not the least fear of his resent-
ing

ing my concealment or her injunctions, when he should be acquainted without reserve by what they were occasioned. It was never my design to receive the child and her official parent into my family ; I rather chose to provide them a house near my own, so near that I might continually keep the former under my eye, and inspect the conduct of the latter. By this means I secured to myself all the advantages I could propose, had they lived under my roof, without laying myself open to the censure of a world too much inclined, if our actions will admit of a double sense, to have fixed that which will do the least honour to our reputations.

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When

When every thing was ready for their reception, I returned to fetch them from England; I could not trust my angel to cross the water under any other protection but my own; and the pretence I made to my brother for this expedition was, some business I had left unsettled when I was last in that country.— In all the duplicity in which I was by necessity involved, my heart never reproached me on any other occasion; I could have died rather than have submitted to have called in the assistance of art, though by such an auxiliary I might have gained the universe. Deception in the affair on which I was embarked, was become a duty; I owed it to
Heaven;

Heaven ; I owed it to my sister ; I owed it to my conscience ; I was not acting in opposition to its sacred dictates, when I condescended to methods which, in their common nature, are indefensible.

The Duke *de Oboyne* offered to accompany me to Britain, but I had many reasons for waving his proposal ; he made it only to do me pleasure, and I had no difficulty in dissuading him from his purpose. A violent inclination to see again my darling child hurried me from France ; the same impatience would not suffer me to take any repose after I landed at Dover. I arrived there at an unseasonable hour of the

D 2 night ;

night; but no hour then appeared unseasonable. I ordered a carriage the moment I reached the inn; and as soon as it could be got ready, posted forward with more composure of mind than when I measured the same road in pursuit of that dear sister whose fate was now determined.

In all the various afflictions by which my life has been distinguished, I have ever found the horrors of suspense were more insupportable, than when the event I have most dreaded has amounted to certainty: with that intolerable load am I now burthened; and it is more than probable I am doomed to bear it about me with the remnant of my
unhappy

unhappy days. It was about half an hour after eight in the morning, when I was set down at that house in which I had deposited my treasure: like a miser, on visiting his hoard, so I felt myself agitated with a thousand fears that death, or some other despoiler, might have entered my dwelling, and robbed me of my soul's riches. The eager knock I gave signified the arrival of a guest impatient for admittance; *Arlington* understood it; she came herself to the door; her countenance spoke all well; she had a presentiment it was me, yet screamed with surprize; her joy was so great, that she could not bid me welcome; however, she made up for her silence to the thou-

and questions I asked her, by leading me instantly to the sweet subject of my enquiries.

As I stood with more than paternal fondness gazing on the little *Annanette*, who rested her lovely cheek on the downy pillow of repose, undisturbed by those cares from which the infant state is alone exempted, I contemplated her with such exulting rapture, that if ever I was acquainted with true happiness, it was at the instant I describe. *Arlington*, who had by this time found the use of her tongue, began to evince, by expressions, those honest grateful sentiments which were better explained by the sensibility that had before occasioned

occasioned her silence. I was afraid the sound of her voice would have awakened my charmer, and defeated my present enjoyment—I beckoned with my finger—she took the hint, she answered it by laying one of her's on her lips. I had imperceptibly crept close to the bed-side; my transports were ungovernable; I could no longer resist their impulse. Bending one knee on the floor, I laid my face close to that of the innocent babby, and ventured gently to put my mouth to her forehead. How often, how apt are we to condemn in others what we do ourselves without a scruple. I had checked *Arlington* for a whisper, and the next moment committed a greater absurdity.

dity. Notwithstanding all my caution not to have her disturbed, my touch effected it; she lifted up her long dark eye-lashes that concealed from my view such eyes as nothing but the finished beauty of her mother's ever equalled. Smiling, she opened them; her smiles were heavenly; they discovered a thousand dimples that adorned a face fairer than the pure linen which covered the pillow on which she rested, whose whiteness seemed a foil to the delicacy of her complexion. The moment she saw *Arlington*, (for I had moved to a little distance, that she might not be frightened at the appearance of a stranger) she began to talk in a language of her own, but
in

in a voice so musical as I could have listened to for ever without satiety, at the same instant she extended her lovely arms, which appeared to be formed of the purest marble, and executed by the masterly finger of proportion. *Arlington*, who understood her pretty jargon, was taking her from the bed, when, no longer able to hide myself, I stepped forward, and, in her night-cloaths, received her to my bosom.

My God! what were then my extatic emotions? If a parent could feel more for a child of his soul's affections, for his only, his darling offspring, I would not be that parent for the universe; any degree of fondness

fondness that could exceed what I felt, would have been insupportable; but I think I may aver, it was not in the power of possibility to exceed it. Instead of turning away, or shewing any surprize, (as I had apprehended) she received my caresses as if she had known they came from her only friend, who was to supply the place to her of father, mother, every dear, every tender relation. She played with my face, she entangled her fingers in my hair—but, amongst all her love-inspiring actions, that which most delighted me was an involuntary motion of her little hands, for, laying them spread on my breast, she seemed to be taking possession of my heart in form.

The

The idea charmed me—I kissed her eyes, her forehead, and each cheek by turns—I promised none should ever supercede—none ever dispute with her the property she laid her claim to.

From her nursery I went to the room where my breakfast was prepared; but I waited till *Arlington* had dressed and restored to me my infatuating cherub, before I would take any refreshment. The moment she was brought in, she shewed as much eagerness to fly from *Arlington's* arms into mine, as I did to receive her from them. It was with difficulty that I could force the humble creature to sit down in my presence

sence even whilst she poured out the coffee; but telling her with a smile, she must learn to submit to the forms of her present, and forget her former station, she took her place, tho' not without feeling so much confusion at her own consequence, that, tho' her timidity demanded my approbation, it also bespoke my pity.

I was so much devoted to my *Annanette*, who sat smiling and prattling on my knees, that if I had not purposely avoided adding to *Arlington's* uneasy restraint, I should have had no leisure the whole time I was at breakfast, to direct my looks towards the table—but the rattling of cups, the fall of the lid from the tea-

tea-pot, and some other trifling accidents, told me plainly enough, she would not easily recover from the disorder of her spirits on being obliged to exhibit in her new character. I know you will forgive me, my dear Sir *William*. I know, Lady *Edgerton* too will forgive me, for having engaged your attention so long, on a subject which, however interesting to myself, is by no means material to my narrative.—Should I go on thus dwelling on every incident impressed upon my memory, I should at last tire out your patience, and wear away my own abilities, to conclude the remainder of my wonderful undertaking. *Wonderful* it may be called

in a man of my years, of my infirmities, who sits down, like a novelist, to relate his own adventures. Would to God my story had been written with the pen of fiction—I groan under the certainty of its being authentic.

CONTINUATION.

I broke off abruptly; my physicians entered my apartment; their departure leaves me at liberty to proceed. I staid only a short time in London, and arrived at Paris the eleventh day after I quitted it; I then conducted *Arlington* to the house appointed for her residence; and tenderly embracing my little traveller,

traveller, (who had suffered no inconvenience from the voyage or journey) went to visit my brother. The Duke appeared surprized at the shortness of my absence, and pleased that I had brought with me the person in the world who, he said, was most intitled to our protection. To my protection more particularly, is she intitled, my dear Count, (added he) she has acted, as far as was in her power, the part I should have performed to our suffering sister. Mention no more (continued he) the trifling allowance you spoke of when last we talked upon the subject, mention it no more, unless you mean to humble me still lower than I am already humbled by my own torturing

D 2

reflections—

reflections—accept of two thousand livres a year, instead of five hundred, for the use of Mrs. *Arlington*. Do this, Count, or I must relinquish all friendship with a brother who will not admit me to share with him in one act of generosity, of justice, and of gratitude. My former reasons for not contradicting his request prevented me now from opposing it. I was pleased with his warmth, nor did I regret the handsome provision he intended to bestow on the supposed mother of my adopted infant, who I determined should be brought up with all the elegance and splendor due to her birth, to her connections, to her future expectations, but, above all, due—doubly due—to the

the misfortunes of her amiable, ill-fated parent.

The Duke *De Oboyne's* liberality would make him over-look my profuseness; profuse I designed to be—nothing of expence was to be withheld in accomplishing the scheme I had projected; he could not possibly murmur at any seeming extravagance in my conduct, for which his own example became my precedent.—From those motives I closed with his proposal, and we settled this affair to our mutual satisfaction. The Duchess, being present when this matter was adjusted, was so far from disapproving my brother's intentions, that with tears stealing down

her cheeks, as a proof of my having forgiven her former severity, she desired I would accept from her five hundred livres in addition to the income proposed by the Duke towards the support of the common friend of their family. I was equally moved with the self-accusation contained in this request, as by the generosity of soul it discovered. My brother was still more affected; he caught one of her hands, and putting it into mine, Is it possible, Count, (said he) so much sweetness should plead in vain? I did not reject the offered hand, but I saw he was going to speak, and I would not interrupt him. I fear, (said he) it is a false tenet in our church, that
teaches

teaches us Catholics cannot be too sanguine, or use any improper mode in bringing over heretics to their own opinions—you have not been blinded by prejudice; if our minds had been as enlarged, or our reason as unobscured as your's, Count, we might at this time have all been happy. I say nothing in defence of myself; but surely, brother, some indulgence is due, if not to me, to the errors of my wife, whose only fault has proceeded from wishing to be too perfect. Embrace her, Count, tell her she is pardoned, and confer a lasting obligation on us both. There was no withstanding, there was no resisting so forcible an attack on my tender passions; her own sensibility

had

had already softened the resentment my heart held against her, and the Duke's pathetic address completed their conquest. I did as my brother desired; I embraced the Duchess, and assured her of my friendship, but refused her offered bounty in such a manner as gave her no cause of displeasure.

The rest of the day we spent together with the same social harmony which, for twelve years following, suffered no interruption, nor did the Duchess ever after give me reason to suppose she was insincere in her sorrow for the fate of my sister, or in the professions of regard she made to myself.

In

In the evening before I went home, I looked in on my little family, and found *Arlington* employed in the motherly office of undressing her infant. *Annanette* sprang towards me the moment I came near her; she held out her hands, she seemed to intreat I would take her in my arms. *Arlington* told me it was time *Made-moiselle* was in bed; but, notwithstanding all she could say, I diverted the child and myself a full hour—in tossing her up and down—counting the buttons on my coat—holding her up to the window, and dancing her before a glass. Her liveliness, and the exertion of her feet in the last exercise, began to fatigue me; I resigned her to *Arlington*; I promised
to

to return the next morning, and charged her not to let my charmer lie in bed too long, that I might find her ready to receive me at an early hour. The remainder of that night I passed almost without sleep; I got into a train of reflections, which are the professed enemies of repose; again and again I thought over every turning, every winding in the road before me, arranged over and over my whole plan of operations with exact precision. — My ideas grew romantic; I turned castle-builder, and raised such airy edifices of happiness as, had they stood on a real foundation, would have repaid me for all the malice, all the acrimony, with which fortune has delighted to pur-

sue

sue me. Why do I forestall my disappointments, when I know in their proper places they will come too fast on the friendly bosoms into which I pour them: they are always next my thoughts; I am never a moment disengaged from their obtrusion.

The next morning after this sleepless night, I found my blossom handfomer and more engaging than ever, waiting to give me the early reception I had bespoke the preceding evening. The fine laces which surrounded her lovely face, bosom, and hands, gave it a look of peculiar grace—of peculiar elegance: in short, *Arlington* had that day exhausted all her taste in dress, to
render

render her little charge completely charming; which, from a circumstance that followed, pleased me infinitely. I had just informed *Arlington* of her obligations to the Duke De *Oboyne*, when one of my servants brought me the billet annexed.

B I L L E T.

My wife and I have taken possession of your house, and do not design to give it up till you let us know we have your permission to visit the good woman who is intitled to our affectionate regards: remember, we take no denial; we must see and welcome her to France. Was it fair, Count, to steal this march
upon

upon your friends? Our scheme was formed after you left us last night; your early hours have defeated all our intentions—bid us follow you, and we seal your pardon.

DE OBOYNE.

As soon as I had cast my eye over the contents, I took up a pen, and sent back by the same servant this answer:

A N S W E R.

My house is honoured by the reception of its present possessors; but as they seem to desire a pretence to leave it, let them follow the bearer of this, and their condescension

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shall

shall be rewarded by the thanks of their worthy pensioner; and, if in her usual good humour, by the smiles of a lovely infant, the most engaging of all children.

DE POLAND.

Instead of sending this note, I should have gone in person to conduct them; but I foresaw I had a difficult task to perform, which would detain me where I was, and find me full employment till their arrival. I was not mistaken; for no sooner had I made known the honour intended her, than I thought the poor creature would have expired under the various assaults of surprise,

surprize, terror, and confusion. I had but just got over her timid reluctance to sit in my presence; she was but barely able to support it with tolerable composure. It happened as I expected; the thoughts of appearing before the Duke and Duchess made her relapse into all her former frights, which nothing but the fear of offending me could have so far conquered, as to prevail on her to promise she should answer my summons, whenever I thought proper to order her attendance. Having gained this point, and advised her to exert some fortitude, that she might receive with less pain to herself a distinguishing mark of favor, which would

be highly flattering to almost any other woman; I then told her, if she pleased, she might retire till I saw it necessary for her to return.— With an air full of humility, she seized on the liberty I had granted her, offering to take the child with her; but I bade her leave it with me, and away she hurried, as if afraid my visitors would come upon her before she should have the power of making her escape.

My fondness for *Annanette* could not be declared too early, or too publicly; to have concealed it, or dealt out my favours by stealth, was below the dignity of her real quality, which I then imagined would be
one

one day brought to light, and degrading to that amazing fund of love which, on all occasions, I should make it my glory to publish for the sweet orphan of my care. These were my reasons for not parting with her when I dismissed *Arlington*; I resolved that my brother and his wife, at their first entrance into the house, should witness the strength of my attachment, to prevent their being after surprized or disappointed at the lengths I should be carried in her education and future provision.

Arlington had been gone but a short time from the room, when the Duke and Duchess entered it. The first object that engaged their at-

tention was my charmer—she was sitting at my side on a pillow of the sofa, playing with my watch-chain, which I had taken from my pocket to amuse her. My God! they exclaimed, in the tone and attitude of astonishment. What an angel! cried the Duchesse. My brother stood still; he did not advance a step after he had once fixed his eyes on my beloved. What have we here, Count?—Is it a real child, or is it the production of art which you have procured to deceive our senses? If the latter, whoever was the artist deserves to have his works immortalized. Such of his works as these, replied I, carrying *Annette* towards him, were designed by

by the Divine Master for immortality—here, take her—examine the materials of which she is composed, tell me then if it is possible for human skill to imitate the beauties which come thus perfect from the hands of our great Creator. As I said this, I threw her into his extended arms—extended to receive her. Nature struggled in the bosom of her uncle—I saw its workings with amazement, and began to fear it might lead to some questions that I wished him to avoid. Luckily for me, he did not understand from whence proceeded his own emotions; the lively efforts of blood he mistook for the common efforts of admiration, which he bestowed on her

her in the most extravagant expressions. He almost smothered her with kisses, and did not seem to intend she should quit his arms, had not a thousand importunities obliged him to resign her to the caresses of the Duchesse. At first my darling appeared pleased with their fondness, but at length, being often snatched from one to the other, her smiling face was over-clouded, and a burst of tears signified that she found herself incommoded.

The Duke and Duchesse tried by various methods to lay the storm they had raised; but I, pretending to be greatly disgusted with the noise of children, when they ceased to

to be good-humoured, rang the bell, and ordered a servant to take away *Annanette*, and put her into the hands of her mother.

This lovely child then (said my brother, after she was carried out) is the daughter of my dear *Maria's* faithful servant; I remember her mother was remarkably plain in her person, but she has no reason to complain; for in the charms of that infant, her own deficiency of beauty is made up with usury; it would be infinite pity if so sweet a child should want education suitable to her other perfections; that, my dear, must be our future care. I told him he had already contributed too largely

largely to the support of her mother.

Alas! when I pronounced the word *mother*; when I felt the sentence to which the word mother was united, I received such a check at my heart,—a shock so violent, as I cannot describe. Reflection instantaneously conveyed me to that horrid den of poverty in which my *Maria* was suffered to languish out her wretched days—unfriended—unprotected—without the common supports of life—without the comfortable presence of hope. Yet, what did I say? I said he had already done too much for her mother, that mother, whom he had despised,

despised, neglected, forsaken. What I might further have added to my false assertion, was forgot; the vision of her sufferings occupied the whole space of memory. I begged we might talk on that subject some other time; and, turning confusedly to the Duchess, to hinder their observing the agitated condition of my mind, I asked her permission to present to her the good *Arlington*. By all means, said she; I am impatient to embrace, and assure her, not only of my protection, but my friendship—my request ought to have prevented your application; but that dear bewitching child occasioned my omission. My brother added something to the same purpose, and immediately

immediately I ordered her attendance. She obeyed my summons—her reception was so gracious; so many obliging acknowledgements were made to her, so many kind praises lavished on her supposed daughter, that though she entered trembling and confounded, I observed with pleasure her confusion soon abated. The extreme affability of the Duke and Duchess made the scene less tremendous than she expected; nor do I ever recollect to have seen her appear to more advantage than in their presence. They obliged her to sit between them; they confessed themselves her debtors, and loaded her with assurances of their favour. The good sense
she

she was mistress of, displayed itself in her returns of gratitude, which were accompanied with so much modest humility, as perfectly charmed both my brother and his wife. Their visit was not a short one; they promised to repeat it; and before they took their leaves, the Duchess told *Arlington* she would forfeit her friendship, unless she came often to the palace, and brought with her the enchanting *Annanette*. I promised for her obedience at such times as she might be most private; and for twelve years after, a day seldom passed in which they did not oblige her to bring the child to them.— This was a great advantage to my beloved.

There was not in the kingdom a woman more highly accomplished than the *Duchess de Oboyne*. She had taken so great an inclination to my sweet innocent lamb, that she examined into her improvements, and directed her studies with a solicitude nearly maternal. Often has she requested *Arlington* to give up the infant entirely to her care; for, that having no child of her own, and loving *Annanette* with a parent's fondness, she should experience the effects of that fondness, not only in her present attention, but in her future establishment. These offers were rejected politely, but with firmness, by my agent, as often as repeated.

The

The Duchefs, finding all her solicitations could not avail, at laft dropped them, contenting herfelf with giving my daughter every proof of her affection to which ſhe had been accuſtomed.

I ſhall no longer tire out your patience with tedious deſcriptions, which, in the infancy of my child, I thought may not be unneceſſary to give you ſome idea of the unbounded love that filled my whole ſoul for the comfort, the ſtaff, the very life of my exiſtence, and to ſhew you at how early a period I began to place my views of happineſs on this darling, this one darling object.

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When

When they had been settled some years under my own inspection, and honoured with the auspices of my brother's family, the countenance the Duke and Duchess gave *Arlington*, made me find no difficulty in selecting such company to visit her, whose acquaintance I should approve for my daughter, as she advanced towards maturity. I cultivated an intimacy with men of the greatest genius, both of your nation and my own; so that as *Annanette* grew up, the frequent opportunities she had of conversing with them, enlarged her mind, and refined her sentiments, whilst it added a brilliancy to her native wit, which was more astonishing than common.—

Her

Her acquirements began to shew themselves even before that season when childhood is supposed to be capable of no more than making its language understood. I weep to think how infinitely she surpassed my fondest wishes, my most sanguine expectations; my tears increase when I reflect how cruelly she has been torn from the bosom of her doating father.

It is too much for me—I find myself sick at heart—I will endeavour to walk a little in my garden.

CONTINUATION.

My sickness has hleft me—I am better—I will try to finish my

G 3

narrative.

narrative. *Arlington* had not long been used to her elegant house, a genteel equipage, a respectable retinue, and the appellation of *Madame*, before she lost some part of that painful timidity which so greatly incommoded her when first she assumed the rank to which her merit had exalted her. The humility of her mind suffered no abatement, but the ease and politeness of her manners gained her universal respect.—Every one applied to her judgment in any little incident that required the advice of a person who was well acquainted with the world, with its laws, and with its customs. Though fixed in a country of catholicks, she was never molested on account of her

her principles ; and your Ambassador's chapel answered all the ends of living under a Protestant government. I found the means of engaging his Excellency's chaplain in my interest ; and, by his assistance, my dear child's instruction in that religion to which she was destined by the last request of her beloved mother, was not confined to the limited capacity of one director, and that director a woman.

I had not yet thought it proper to instruct my *De Poland* with the secret of her name or birth. She believed me the friend to whom her supposititious parent owed her subsistence—the friend to whom she herself

herself was indebted for advantages of education so much above the humility of her mother's former station, *Arlington* having acquainted her that I had redeemed them from very low circumstances. These considerations alone were enough to secure me the duty, the tenderest affections, of my dear child. She loved me with the same fervency as if I had been her father. She divided her attentions equally between the person she supposed her mother and myself. The Duke and his Duchess enjoyed the second place in her heart. It was impossible for a young creature of so amiable a disposition to receive such continual marks of favour as they bestowed on her,

her, with indifference or insensibility. She had scarcely attained her twelfth year, when fame began to send out her praises; they were not confined to *Paris*; they were founded through the remotest corners of France.

Mademoiselle Arlington was spoke of as the prodigy of the age; her beauty, her wisdom, her modesty, and superlative accomplishments, were the topics of almost every conversation. My heart bounded at the report of fame. I have often called upon the blessed spirit of my *Maria*, to look down on her perfect daughter, and share with me the transports of a delighted parent. Oh! had she

she been permitted to hear me! had she been appointed the guardian angel of our joint treasure, I should not at this time groan under the severest of all afflictions.

I was obliged to tear myself from this adorable child, just as she entered her thirteenth year. Honour commanded me—I went against the infidels—the cruel commands of honour were not to be resisted; but when I obeyed them, I left my soul in the possession of my *De Poland*. I cannot recount the particulars of our melancholy *adieux*. Dear, dear child! How was she distressed? I am distracted by recollection. My God! my God! hast thou still preserved her?

her? Oh, if yet she wanders in this vale of misery, guide, I beseech thee, my feeble steps to the place of her retreat; or, if thy hand of mercy has extended itself to snatch from oppression my precious darling, take me also, oh, my God! unite me to her in those eternal mansions of bliss, from which comforts flow, unsullied by grief, untainted by misfortunes. I have been self-interrupted,—forgive the interruption.

Before I left France, I received the strongest assurances from my brother and the Duchess, that they would endeavour to make my absence supportable to my adopted, an appellation by which they always distin-

distinguished my lovely child. This they promised, without suspecting how much they were themselves concerned in her welfare, or how great a claim nature had given her to my brother's indulgence: But enough on this subject, I shall tell you by and by how well this brother performed the promises he made me.

I did not quit my country till I had fixed *Arlington* above the possibility of feeling my absence in pecuniary matters; yet this by no means lessened her regret. The genuine tears she shed, of grateful tenderness, must have increased my sorrows, if, after I had torn myself from more than life or happiness,
my

my affliction would have admitted of addition. I gave her in charge carefully to hide from *Annanette* the secret she had in keeping, not that I doubted my child's prudence, but I dreaded her complacency.

I was afraid the insinuating distinction she received from the Duke and Duchess might, when she knew how nearly she was related to the one and connected with the other, have found a way to her confidence. Had this happened, the consequence of such a discovery would, I thought, defeat all my endeavours to perform that sacred engagement, for the observance of which, my very soul was pledged.

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I did

I did not suppose I should be long absent, and resolved at my return to disclose, under proper restrictions, as much of her real situation as it was necessary she should be acquainted with. Some events in the life of her parents, some exceptionable parts in the Duke *de Oboyne's* conduct for the sake of her future peace, I intended to have buried in oblivion; gladly would I have banished them from my own memory, but that was impossible.

The expedition on which I embarked was unfortunate to myself, and destructive to all my prospects. The ship in which I commanded was, after an obstinate resistance, in
which

which I lost half my brave warriors, taken by the infidel-wretches who bear malice so inveterate to men of my order, that, when we fall into their hands, death is the greatest mercy we have to expect. Even this mercy was with-held from me; my name was not unknown in that barbarous country; my treatment, on this account, was doubly severe. Five years I dragged after me the abject chain of slavery; my body was not spared the daily lashes of cruelty; but my mind suffered torments a thousand times more intolerable than their lashes could inflict. My child, my darling child! it was not the stripes of my enemies that drew the tear of agony from

H 2

my

my eyes; it was to leave thy infant innocence that wrung it from me; to leave thee before I had seen the fruition of my only hope, before I had given thee to the arms of a protector, who would tenderly shelter thee from the blast, the storms of fortune. To leave thee thus, humbled me in the dust of despondency; to leave thee thus, made me turn away from the wretch's only asylum. I could have welcomed, I could have courted death, as my best, my kindest friend; I could have courted him to my embraces; but when he seemed approaching near me, I saw in him the enemy of my *De Poland*, the enemy who would cut off all possibility of my ever more officiating

ting

ting to her in the fond office of a parent, a guardian—I saw him in this light, and in this light only wished to avoid him. Heaven was at length moved by my prayers and softened by my lamentations. When I least expected so great a blessing, by a miracle I was restored to freedom; by what means it was accomplished, I cannot here inform you; they are circumstances too intricate to mingle with my present recital. I shall content myself with telling you, that I returned to France about six months before I had the honour of meeting you at *Montpellier*, where I came to try if the air of that place could prop up my tottering constitution, till I should have performed

one act more, which, if attended with success, will make me lay my head low on the earth without regret, without a murmur.

It is impossible for me to describe to you the situation of my mind, from the time I escaped captivity to the time when I found myself within the gates of Paris; I can only compare it to a ship tossing on the tempestuous ocean, now lifted to the heavens, the next moment plunged in the briny bowels of the deep—so one instant was I elated on the pinion of hope, the succeeding buried in the gloomy abyss of despair; now calmly gliding on the bosom of imaginary security,

curity, anon agitated by suspense, and racked with direful apprehensions. The first person I met on entering the city, was my Taylor. To see one single face that I knew, inspired me with joy. I stopped the carriage; and, as he was hastily passing, beckoned him to me. I felt as much eagerness to speak to this poor man, as if it had been alone in his power to confirm my hopes, or ascertain my fears; so foolish are the miserable, that they will catch after shadows, where the substance has eluded their pursuit. How absurd to expect from the mouth of this obscure person, any intelligence of my child! Could he possibly inform me if she was well or ill, happy or unhappy,

unhappy, protected or unprotected; if she lamented my absence as I had done my tedious separation from her; if she sorrowed for my death; or if she believed me still numbered with the living? In all these particulars, my soul passionately longed to be instructed. His face striking my memory, when I was most incapable of reasoning, like a drowning man I caught at the first reed that offered. When I beckoned him toward me, I had not considered that, without answering any purpose, I was only prolonging that time, the slowness of which, in bringing me to my treasure, I had before bitterly complained of. *Monsieur Tastetee* approached with a look that
con-

convinced me he had no recollection of my person. Perhaps it was a weakness; but I own to you I was shocked at the alteration that must be so very visible when it could blot all traces of remembrance from the mind of a man who had known me from the age of twenty. Had I been then capable of reflection, I should have thought the hard labour, the fatigues, and cruelties I had undergone in a five years' slavery, made his forgetfulness an event not only to be expected, but most wonderful, that I should still be living to observe the effects it had produced. He addressed me as a stranger; and I was not inclined to undeceive him with an embarrassed air, as though
my

my fate depended on his answer. I asked if he could give me any information of the Duke *de Oboyne*, or of Madame and Mademoiselle *Arlington*, two English ladies, who lived under the Duke's and his brother the Count *de Poland's* protection. I know nothing, *Monsieur*, he replied, of the ladies you enquire after; and, as I have not the honour to work for *Monsieur le Duke*, I know almost as little of him. I saw him, continued he, the other day, going to court; he looked in very good health; but he buried *Madame le Duchesse* ten months ago.— I asked him what it was thought was become of the *Count de Poland*. Alas! replied he, the *Count de Poland*,
my

my dear old master, may God have mercy on his precious soul!—he too is dead; a thousand times a day my poverty reminds me of his loss. He said no more; he hurried away; but as soon as his back was turned, I saw him take out a handkerchief, and apply it to his eyes. Poor *Tashtee*! thy gratitude, nor thy poverty, shall not be forgotten by thy old master. I expended a tear on his honest sensibility; I did not miss the sympathetic drop, when the blow that awaited fell upon me, and drove them down my cheeks in torrents.

Before I went to my own house, my anxious haste directed me to *Arlington's*. The doors, the windows,
were

were all shut up—dire presentiment! I looked wishfully at them—it was early—perhaps they were yet in bed. I knock'd—knock'd—knock'd—my arm at length grew tired, my heart fainted within me. A labourer passing by told me no-body had lived in that house for more than two years. My head fell upon my bosom. I caught hold of the peasant's shoulder, and staggered under the weight of my apprehensions. A mob were beginning to gather about us—I begged his assistance to lead me that way, pointing to my own house. He bore, rather than led me; without his support I never could have reached it. An old man, whose head had grown grey in the service of my father,

father before he entered into mine, heard my claim for admittance, and cautiously opened the door. He saw I was ill—he looked with concern on my condition; and when he suffered me to come in, it was an act of humanity in which duty had no part—in the poor feeble wretch of his commiseration, he could not distinguish the master to whom he owed obedience. I was creeping towards my own apartment; but this faithful servant stopt me; he said I might, if I pleased, repose myself in his room; but the way I was going, led to a part of the house (and he sighed deeply) to which, since the loss of his dear Lord, no stranger had been admitted. I stood

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still;

still; I looked at him more fixedly:—is it possible, *Duvergey*, is it possible, my *Duvergey* has forgot me? My voice performed what my presence could not effect. The illusion vanished; I saw my good faithful servant at my feet; I saw him in a transport of joy that approached on the borders of insanity. My return appeared to him as a resurrection; and it was some time before I could convince him that I existed in reality. The moment I found him capable of attending to any thing but his own extreme amazement, I commanded him to inform me of all he knew concerning Madame and Mademoiselle *Arlington*; what was the reason they had quitted the
house

house in which I left them; and to what part of Paris they were removed? I am sorry, he replied, (the word *sorry* struck to my heart) I am sorry that I should be obliged to acquaint your Lordship with tidings that will afflict you. My trembling increased; I bade him go on, in a voice hardly articulate. The Lady you enquire after has been dead upwards of three years, and Mademoiselle has since that time—— Then it is not my child, my *Annanette*, that is dead, (cried I) praised be the gracious decrees of providence—it is not my child, my *Annanette*. Why do you not proceed? forgetting I had interrupted him—why do you not tell me with whom my *Annanette* has

I 2

taken

taken refuge? He begged my pardon; he said he was going to inform me, that ever since that time, *Mademoiselle* had been in the Duke *de Oboyne's* family, the *Duchess* herself having carried her home to the palace immediately on the death of her mother, and, for any thing he knew to the contrary, she was still there, though the *Duchess* had been dead more than ten months.

I now felt as if the weight of a mountain had been taken from my breast. The grief I should at any other time have experienced for the fate of poor *Arlington*, was swallowed up in the certainty that my darling was still alive; that she was
under

under the protection of a relation, who, without knowing himself such, had treated her with affection; that I should again hold her in my arms, and see her established in a state of affluence, a state of independence.

I was resolved now to acknowledge her—to settle my whole fortune on this child of my adoption, and never to lose sight of her more till I had fixed her in the world.—Blank!—blank!—blank! all these hopes—all these resolves.

To a mind long oppressed by sadness, how astonishing the operation of comfort, how strong the emotions, how sudden its influence!—

With what electrical swiftness it enters our souls! From experience I make this observation; I felt it all on being told my dear child was in safety. My feelings of pain and pleasure were never guided by mediocrity: I have been destined to sustain all the shocks, all the smiles of fortune, in her most fickle humour, like an infant wanting the strength of reason to conduct his passions. The exaltation of my spirits was so great, that it elevated me to a degree of false vigour; I even ceased to remember the fatigues, the horrors, from which I had but just escaped; or, if they glanced by me, the recollection served me only to sweeten the joys of expectation.

As

As soon as I had given a decent appearance to my person, with a light heart and chearful countenance, I drove to the *Palace de Oboyne*, pleasing myself on the way with the imaginary surprize of the Duke, with the transports of my *Annanette*, when the former should have received a note I dispatched to signify my arrival, and to say he might instantly expect me, for that I should not wait the return of my messenger. I observed this caution, on finding my death was so firmly believed in France, that my family had all gone through the common forms of mourning on the occasion. I admired the all-gracious, the inscrutable ways of Heaven; I adored its decrees;

decrees ; I said to myself, in the extatic gratitude of my soul, My God, I am oppressed with thy divine goodness ! thou hast lifted me from the dark vale of misfortune. I shall never again be afflicted. This was my ejaculation as I entered the hall of the Palace de Oboyne ; nor was I ever less prepared than at that moment to combat with disappointments severer than any I had yet experienced. A surly porter, as I was going, without ceremony, to the inner apartments, asked my name. I told him I was *the Count De Poland*. His countenance dropt the air of command it had before assumed ; and, bowing low, he informed me, the Duke had been
some

some days at his country villa, from whence he was not expected to return till the latter end of the week following. But where is *Mademoiselle Arlington*? I hope, said I, hastily, she too has not left Paris. I came to my place but last night, he replied; I hardly know a single name in the house; but I suppose, my Lord, the person you enquire for is within: there is a Lady, continued he, who, I am told, governs the Duke's family; and just now I received her orders to admit the *Count De Poland*, though an hour before her commands were, that she would see no company. This was enough—transporting intelligence! it could be no other than my beloved; who

who else could it be that governed in the Duke's family? I would not wait for a servant to conduct me; I flew to the late Duchess's apartment, which I concluded was now occupied by my *De Poland*—I knew she would be impatiently expecting me, and that my sudden appearance, though unannounced, would not alarm her. As I threw open the door, my paternal arms extended to receive her. I started back with an exclamation of surprize, on being saluted by a young handsome woman, of a coquettish aspect, and in a studied *dishabille*, which had more in it of shew than taste or elegance. As she stepped forward to receive me, she could not but observe my
embarr-

embarrassment. I did not immediately enter into her character ; I supposed she might be some acquaintance of *Annanette*, whom the Duke had engaged, to prevent her being quite alone in his absence. Under this supposition I so far got the better of my visible mortification, as to meet her advances with civility. I beg your pardon, Madam, (said I, in some confusion) for so abruptly intruding on your privacy ; I thought to have found no company in Mademoiselle *Arlington's* apartment ; and my impatience to see that dear child, after an absence of six years, will, I presume, be admitted an excuse for the rudeness I have undesignedly committed. Excuse, my dear Count, there

there need no apologies, (replied she with an easy assured air) apologies are quite unnecessary ; I should be the most ungrateful creature on earth, not to receive as the highest honour, a visit from the brother of my friend. I was so astonished at these incomprehensible words, and the levity with which she delivered them, that I was unable to speak, and could think of nothing but the impropriety *Annette* had shewn in the choice of a companion—for the first time in my life I thought her faulty, and felt a degree of anger at her conduct, that would have kept me silent, had this flimsy talkative coquette given me an opportunity to be otherwise. No-body, continued she,

she, with a detestable leer, could rejoice more than I did, when I received your note this morning—Your brother, Count, keeps no secret from me, which will explain why I happened to be the first of the family who had the good fortune to hear of your return. All the world have thought you dead and buried an age ago; but I had a presentiment, your billet contained agreeable tidings, even before I broke the seal.

Great Heaven! what were my feelings whilst she ran on at this rate—the brother of my *friend*—your brother keeps no secret from *me*—the *first* of the family acquainted with my return!—What expressions

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were

were these! What was I to suppose? My resentment to *Annanette* was inflamed; I looked on her as a poor undone girl; but my resentment was ten times greater to the Duke de *Obayne*, who had placed my once innocent lamb in the power of this destructive wanton—the slave of his criminal pleasures. That she was his mistress, his declared mistress, would not admit a doubt; she had even dared to shock my ear with boasting of those honours she enjoyed by prostitution. I was, in my own mind, fully convinced my lost *De Poland* was still in this fatal house; yet my rage burnt with such violence, at her condescending to live under the same roof with the *fille*
de

de joye of a man who called himself her protector, that I formed the sudden resolution of going away without seeing, or so much as asking for her. I arose in an agony not to be described, and, without looking towards the wretch before me, made to the door. Here I stopped; the idea of my dearest sister glided through my soul; me-thought she seemed to chide my impetuosity; me-thought she bade me return, and save her daughter, to save her at least from further infamy. I could not resist the pleadings of this imaginary vision, or rather the dictates of my own relenting tenderness, which a momentary reflection on her much-loved mother had nearly raised to

its former standard. Madam, said I, turning hastily back, and taking the chair I had just quitted, I do not enquire on what footing you preside in my brother's family, or by what right you presume on liberties unbecoming any character but that of a married woman; nay, often not permitted even to a wife—The late Duchess would not have opened a note directed to the *Duke de Oboyne*; but that at present is not my business with you—my commands are, that you instantly go and bring to my presence *Mademoiselle Arlington*, to whom my visit was intended. I mean to take her from a companion and situation, which the freedoms you have given yourself, and to which
 you

you seem to suppose you are intitled, has not made me think unexceptionable for a young lady of honour and distinction, who has her own reputation and that of a noble family to support.

The creature did not appear at all hurt by my reproaches. She told me, with an easy assurance, that she did not apprehend the Duke was to account for his actions to any man; and, for her own part, she would submit her's to no authority but that of her holy confessor. Woman, (said I, interrupting her, with a haughty imperious accent) I ask not any account of thee or of thy actions. I trouble myself with neither—those

of a brother, who has injured me in the tenderest point, who has made the child of my adoption the companion of a prostitute, I cannot behold with the same indifference—go, (continued I fiercely) this moment fetch the poor deluded *Annanette*, or shew me the room into which she has retired to avoid my just upbraidings—do this, or I swear by the Almighty, thou shalt not, even in the house of thy infatuated keeper, find protection from my vengeance.

I believe it was more owing to the determined manner in which I spoke, than from any real fear which she entertained that I should execute my threats, in a place where she commanded

manded with absolute uncontroul—
but, whatever was the motive, for the
first time, she appeared rather intimi-
dated, and desired I would permit
her to defend herself against an ac-
cusation of which she was entirely
innocent, tho' she saw with concern
the supposition of her being other-
wise left her little hopes of remo-
ving my prejudice, or lessening my
anger. I made her no answer; I
was meditating whether it might
not be best to hear what she had to
say, before I saw *Annanette*, the bet-
ter to judge what sort of reception
she was intitled to, or whether I
should insist on my former orders
being obeyed, and take her away
without troubling myself about a
tale

tale which, it was more than probable, this bad woman would invent to answer some secret purpose. Before I could determine, she, taking my silence for a permission to proceed, did not wait for any other.—I see, my Lord, on what score my presence is hateful to you—I am, in your opinion, an improper friend for *Mademoiselle Arlington*; you are afraid by my example her morals are corrupted—you are sure she is at this very time under the Duke's protection—you think she is an inmate in his family; but, Count, you are deceived; I honoured *Mademoiselle's* virtues, without aspiring to her friendship, except by rendering her such services as even you must approve,

prove, when I have informed you of their nature. I had now no inclination to interrupt her, and she proceeded:—When *Mademoiselle* was brought hither by my late Lady, (for I had the honour to serve the Duchesse in quality of her first woman) at that time being innocent myself, the extreme affliction under which I saw *Mademoiselle*, both for the death of her mother, as well as for the uncertainty of your fate, my Lord, was so great, that it pierced my heart; and her melancholy had such an effect on me, that I have often wept in private over the reflection of her sorrows.—I felt myself much agitated, much interested, but was still silent.—*Mademoiselle*, my Lord,
not-

notwithstanding the Duke and Duchess treated her as their own daughter, was always so sweetly condescending to her inferiors, that it was impossible for me to avoid loving, and wishing to serve her. My Lady had not been dead three months, when an opportunity offered of my serving her essentially. You, Count, who have been so many years absent, can form no idea of the delicacy of *Mademoiselle's* sentiments; but I saw that it would be impossible she should survive the slightest tarnish her character could receive. The *Duke de Oboyne's* age, together with her considering him as a father, rather than in any other light, made her, my Lord, see no impropriety in

in granting his request, that she would not leave this palace, at least till some necessary affairs, in consequence of the will you had left, were settled in her favour. I was the first to perceive the danger of her situation; her honour was dear to me, because I saw her happiness depended on its preservation, and I became the guardian of that honour so precious to her, at the risque of forfeiting my own interest in a place of great emolument. Perhaps, my Lord, you may mistake my meaning; though it is in vain to deny on what footing I at present live with your brother, yet I solemnly declare, the Duke, as I believe, had never so much as once turned his eye to-

towards me, as long as this house was the residence of *Mademoiselle Arlington*.—What, cried I, and is not my *Annanette* under this detested roof?—Oh! if thou hast been the preserver of her honour, I am no longer thy enemy; I will adore thee as the saviour of my peace—but did my brother—speak, Madam—could my brother—my soul shudders till you ease my mind of suspicions not to be borne.—I understand you, my Lord; but, tho' your doubts are not without foundation, yet the Duke may claim some indulgence on the score of ———. Hold, Madam, I will be the judge of that when I have heard you at an end; but, before you speak again on any subject,
tell

tell me in two words,—is my child in a place of safety?—was virtue the companion of her flight?—That the purest virtue, my Lord, accompanied her from hence, my life, my soul, shall answer—farther I cannot inform you.—Enough, and yet me-thinks I could listen to thee for ever—my child, my dear child, is virtuous; praised be Heaven that she is virtuous—but how comes it you know not her destination?—

Mademoiselle, my Lord, did not acquaint me with her intentions; she was sensible of my friendship, in taking the bandage from her eyes; but would not involve me in the Duke's displeasure, by accepting my assistance to further her escape. I

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did not, my Lord, even know the hour or the day she had fixed on for the accomplishment of her design; and, though the Duke has since used every possible endeavour to find out the place of her concealment, he has not yet been successful.—Blessed! (I exclaimed) for ever blessed be Providence, that he has not succeeded!—my child is innocent—better her abode should be with wild beasts on the desert mountains, than fall again into the power of a human savage, more terrible, more destructive than the most dreadful animal of prey.—Answer me one more question, and I have done. Did this false friend, did this savage brother, ever insult *Annanette's* delicacy

delicacy with the brutal declaration of his passion.—Not, my Lord, by an open confession, (replied she) but *Mademoiselle* was very sensible at the end of his third month of widowhood, that his affection for her person was not of that disinterested nature which she had believed it to be in the life-time of his Duchefs.—How came you, Madam, (returned I) to know the suspicions she entertained?—With a flood of tears, my Lord, she confessed them to me; when for her security, I was obliged to add to her alarms, by communicating my own doubts, which almost amounted to certainty, and which made her determine to fly far from his pursuit; she left behind all the valuable pre-

sents the Duke had given her with profusion, and even those she had received from the Dukes.

How at that moment did I glory in my *De Poland*. I asked my informer how the news of her flight was received by the Duke?—I thought, answered she, he would have gone distracted for some weeks after her elopement; but, at length, my assiduities moderated his affliction; and I did not think myself unfortunate in being the instrument to draw off his attention from the remembrance of *Mademoiselle Arlington*. That young Lady (continued she, with a harlot's smile) was so exceedingly beautiful, so very amiable,

able, so uncommonly engaging, surely, my Lord, your brother's fault lessens as we consider the temptation—he had loved her from infancy as a father. Ah! my Lord, how easy the transition from one degree of love to another!—No more of this, Madam, said I; as the preserver of my child's honour, you have a claim on my gratitude, and shall not lose the reward of a good action; Heaven itself will balance it against others you may have committed that are not unexceptionable; but, for the man who would have despoiled me of a treasure on which he knew my heart reposed—which, in a manner, I had intrusted to his guardianship,—with that man my

foul disclaims all friendship, all alliance—rather would I hug the rotten carcase of disease to my bosom, call it friend and brother, than ever again acknowledge either of those titles in the *Duke de Oboyne*, whose mind is infected with the leprosy of deceit, ingratitude, and vice. I do not tell you this, Madam, continued I, by way of expending in words any part of that resentment which is the effect of injuries too great for pardon, even if humanity was almost endowed with the mercy of Omnipotence—I tell it you with a design that he should not be kept in ignorance of my sentiments ; and I require it of you, Madam, not only to communicate them to the Duke, but

but also to prevent him from teasing me with applications.—The truth of your strange relation will not, I am sorry to say, admit a doubt; the flight of *Annanette* proves it clearly—if he persecutes me with solicitations, he may drive me from the kingdom, but whether here or in any other part of the world, tell him it is my determination never to see—never to hear from him again.

This command, with some degree of reluctance, she promised to obey. And now, my Lord, said she, I shall solicit a favour, which, if you think I have any demand on your gratitude, I know you will not refuse me.—I bade her proceed.—

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The discovery I have made was the effect of respect to your Lordship, who I saw was so greatly shocked at your first appearance, and of compassion for *Mademoiselle Arlington*—it occurred to me if you were acquainted with her real reason for leaving the Duke, you would for the future be less liable to impositions, or misled by false opinions, which might otherwise limit your search after that amiable young lady. As these were my motives, continued she, I hope, Count, you will have the goodness to conceal from whom you got your intelligence—was your brother to know what I have done, he would never forgive me; I am contented with my situation; and,

if

if I am guilty of a crime in wishing to be continued in it, Heaven is merciful, and I have years enough before me for repentance; I shall tell the Duke you have been here; I shall tell him that, on my informing you *Mademoiselle* was gone nobody knew whither, you had solemnly vowed never to see or hear from him again. Will this do, my good Lord, or is it necessary, in rendering you a service, I should displease my protector, and for ever forfeit his favour?—I said, she might do as she pleased; that she had nothing to fear on my part; that I should bear about my wrongs in silence as long as, by her management, she could keep the Duke from molesting

molesting me with his presence.— She engaged to use her best endeavours to obey my directions; and I took my leave, if not the most miserable, the most disappointed of human beings. The most miserable I could not call myself. God Almighty had snatched my child from pollution: he had not permitted her degenerate uncle to add the horrid crime of incest to his catalogue of offences.

When I turned towards the gloomy prospect of complicated evils that threatened the evening of my days with storms and tempest, I should have thought myself excluded from every gleam of comfort,
but

but when I considered how much more wretched I might have been, how very narrowly I had escaped a misfortune which would have driven me to madness, my griefs became more supportable, and I was happy by comparison.

After this fatal visit to the *Palace de Oboyne*, I staid but one night in Paris. I could not suppose my child had concealed herself so near the enemy of her soul. I sought her in the environs for several months, till my little stock of health and spirits were so much wasted, that I came to Montpellier, in hopes to reinforce them enough to enable me take a journey to your country, having

having from the first appointed agents in both kingdoms to forward her discovery.—Alas! how like her fate to that of her beloved mother! God forbid in all respects it should be similar.

I am still determined to pursue my first intentions of going to England, when I see the least probability of my existence lasting out a journey which, at present, I am as incapable of undertaking, as if not yet released from the shackles of slavery. My physicians, since I came here, have put me on a regimen of milk; and I submit to all the modes they can devise to prolong a life, which, it is yet possible, may be cheared
with

with the sweet smiles of my darling *De Poland*. I dread the return of the *Duke de Oboyne* from Montpellier; weak as I am, I dare not trust myself in the same place with him; I would rather leave Paris at a moment's warning, than run the risque of his forcing an admittance to my presence. My servants informed me he had been most days at my house to enquire for me; and I found many letters from him, waiting my arrival, which I have forwarded to him unopened. I begin to think he knew that I was at Montpellier, and came thither to persecute me; if so, I am fortunate in my escape—I have done with him for ever—was there a possibility of his being innocent, or even

less guilty than he appears to be by proofs incontestable;—was there a possibility, I repeat, of his being innocent, with what eagerness should I fly to meet his brotherly advances! or less guilty than he really is, in such a case, all possible hope of a reconciliation may not have been cut off. Crimes like his, are not of a common complexion; it was not a common seduction he attempted; the object of his vile passion, whose angelic purity he would have sullied,—he would have humbled even to prostitution,—was the child of my love—the comfort of my life—the staff of my age;—she was intrusted to his care in my absence, and was taught to look up to him

him for paternal support, for paternal protection;—is not the nature of his guilt stained with every aggravating circumstance?

And now, my kind friends, am I come to that period which brings me to the subject on which, in the beginning of my narrative, I bespoke your assistance—you will not reject my prayer—I offer it in the confidence of assured friendship.—Should death prevent me from accomplishing the journey I meditate, to your care I bequeath the completion of that only unperformed action which would cause me to leave with regret a world, whose greatest charm it could ever boast for

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me was, the certainty of quitting it for a better at the end of my painful pilgrimage. When you return to your own country, use your best endeavours, leave no method untried, public or private, to discover my lost angel; the means I do not pretend to point out; too well I know, your goodness will leave none unattempted. I have also taken the liberty of appointing you the guardians of her person and fortune.— You will find in the will I have executed, that, next to my own dear, dear child, Sir *William* and Lady *Edgerton* are now the nearest in the world to my affection. If I live, we shall certainly meet again; if I die, necessity compels me to take
the

the burthen of my cares from my own, and to place them on your shoulders; in either case, the blessing of an old man will do you no harm; mine will ever follow you, with all the energy of love, all the fervency of devotion.

L E T T E R X I X .

LADY ANN FOSTESS TO THE COUNTESS
OF HASSARD.

Cavendish-Square.

I Thank you, dear *Hassard*, for your inimitable advice; it is like yourself, the very quintessence of perfection. I have followed your instructions with as little reluctance

as a bashful maiden accepts a rich lover,—the married dame of fashion a *Cicisbeo*,—or, with which every woman follows her own inclinations. I allow your Ladyship to be the first in the world for projection. I hope you will give me equal credit for execution; but I do not ask your approbation before I have acquainted you with all my manœuvres. I treasured up your precious hints in my heart, till the little giddy affected coquette arrived in town, because there might have been danger in giving any friendly information to the old woman, whilst her daughter continued in the country. A thousand accidents might have brought them together;

my

my letter might have been produced, if for no other reason than to give the wise mother a title for scolding and lectures. This would have been an awkward circumstance enough; one do not like, you know, in matters like these, where one chuses to conceal one's name, to become the subject of tittle-tattle to a parcel of no-bodies; besides, it might not have appeared quite the thing to Lady *Morpeth*, our amazing intimacy considered. My apparent motive was vastly laudable, and ought to gain me her acknowledgments for my extreme care of her reputation, yet I will lay my life, stupid as she is, she would have discovered the contrivance.

It

It was monstrously provoking, that I dared not trust to any person the transcribing this charming letter; it went in my own hand, tho' disguised as much as possible. I hate to confide in servants; and, rather than the *Osmonds* should not have it, I submitted to be my own amanuensis.—Those *prodigious good sort* of old-fashioned people, who, without moving from the smoke of their own chimnies, sit round their Christmas fire, nodding their wise heads at each other, and railing at those who understand the art of living better than they do, are easily thrown out of their bias; they are alarmed and frightened to death, if they think a daughter of their heavy, tottering,

tottering, ivy-grown, unmodern mansion, is verging one inch beyond the straight line which they call prudence; a line on which it has been ever the boast and glory of such odd folks, that all their females have walked steadily from generation to generation, without turning their stiff necks on the right hand or on the left. By what I have heard from *Emily*, her mother is just such a piece of clock-work; and, if I have not wound her up to my purpose, I am much mistaken. The least I expect from my machinations is, that the flirting Countess will receive Madam *Osmond's* positive commands to avoid *Castledown*, who, *entre nous*, is come home a thousand times

times more irresistible than ever in my eyes; you know he has been always irresistible, or why my unconquerable aversion to *Emily*? Now, I suppose, the mother's commands will be enforced by threats of papa, husband, and so forth: you understand me, Lady *Hassard*. Can any thing be more natural than my conjectures? Well, but after all, for I do not take obedience to be in the catalogue of Lady *Morpeth's* weaknesses; after all, should she prove refractory, why, am I not still her bosom friend? Yes; and I will take friendly care that she shall have few opportunities of entertaining *Castle-down* in private. They have not hitherto met; she has gone but seldom

dem into public; she is a complete mistress of those forms necessary to a woman of fashion. This I must confess in her favour, and I know she would rather be imprisoned a whole month in her own apartment, than forfeit her pretensions to delicacy, by not appearing to the world amazingly fatigued with the immense journey of a hundred and twenty miles, performed only in the short space of three days. I share as much of my dear friend's retirement as I can possibly spare from the business of life. If pleasure is not our business, to what purpose do we live? *Emily* knows my taste, and does not insist on my evenings; my mornings I have given up with-

out

out reluctance, from this one simple consideration, that I cannot spend them more agreeably or more usefully than in the circles of this *new-coined* Countess. The whole town are crowding her drawing-room; novelty—novelty, all the world are mad after novelty. If we happen to be a moment alone, that moment is devoted to giving and receiving from each other a thousand assurances of everlasting friendship. I consult her on any little matters that come in my way; and I have sometimes had the ingenuity to frame others, when my stock of trifles have been exhausted, purposely to convince her my heart was incapable of concealment to so dear

dear a friend.—Now, you know, should she limit her confidence to me, certainly she must be the most ungrateful of all confidants. There is but one subject on which I fear her reserve, or would give a pin for her confidence; perhaps she may cheat my expectations; but I will forgive her, if she eludes my vigilance. I have no patience, that *now* she is married, she will not keep herself to herself. I think she might be contented with her Lord and his castle, without pushing her face on the world, to disturb the honest endeavours of us single girls, who are all dying for the lover she jilted. I never knew *Castledown* the slave but of one folly—his attachment to

this insignificant; what charms does she possess which are not to be found much more perfect in people vastly her superiors by birth, wit, fortune, beauty, figure, and polite knowledge? infatuation must have hood-winked his judgment, I will never believe the contrary. The world has nothing in its power so valuable to bestow as would bribe me not to be present at their first interview;—it will probably be next Thursday at *Carnellys*’, where she intends to exhibit all her finery. She is monstrously false; for, notwithstanding my unremitting endeavours to make her confess she still loves *Castledown*, I can get her to acknowledge no such thing; yet she does love him I am positive; but
when

when I tell her so, she laughs, shews her white teeth, and makes such odd answers, that I am often in an absolute passion at her teasing stupidity. I am not to be duped; she is far behind the mark, if she think to smother me out of my suspicions; my senses are all alive, and shall all be employed to blast her expectations. I shall leave you, to dress for Lady T——'s assembly. Adieu.

CONTINUATION.

Late as I return, I snatch up my pen to tell your Ladyship, I looked divinely, to tell you I have seen and talked to *Castledown*.—Ah, Lady *Haffard*! he is the most enchanting

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creature in the universe—so polite, so attentive to me;—not a word, a single word, of Lady *Morpeth*. I was resolved to try of what mettle his heart was formed—I mentioned her name, and said, her Ladyship's indisposition had prevented her appearance that evening. What think you was his answer, spoke too with an air as if he had not heard me? but that he did hear me is positive. I never, Lady Ann, saw an assembly more brilliant; is it possible there can be a beauty of any consequence in Britain, who has not contributed her whole stock of charms to form the lovely circle? What a collection of faces! it may put any other country to the blush, at the

advan-

advantage we have over them.—

Dear Lady *Haffard*, how sweet, how polite, how elegant, the general compliment—it cost me a sigh—I sighed that it was not more particular. I will not despair—if his heart is really dis-entangled from its former thralldom, my glass tells me I shall have as good a chance as another; but I must first get them together before I can form any certain idea of my success; I will watch every word, every look, every turn in the countenance of either, and direct my motions accordingly. If I do not succeed, if I am destined to the mortification of seeing myself slighted, or regarded with indifference by *Castledown*; hear the resolution I have taken: I

will stay here just long enough to draw down the calumny of a busy world on the head of my rival—join in their condemnation—be the loudest in my censures on her conduct; and, having primed the whole town in scandal, shall leave them to fire on the enemy, and march off, to spend the remainder of my unsuccessful campaign in your quarters. I am not the first brave General who has come off second-best in springing a mine, or besieging a fortress. I am persuaded you will receive me in my humiliating fall from glory; but pray tell me, shall we run no risque of being annoyed by the churl your husband?—I hope he will not for ever continue obdurate; I wish

wish devoutly he would take a fancy to any of the young flirts about town, who would jump at a Coronet; some *no-body* like *Emily Osmond*; such an event—and the rest follows of course. Adieu, my dear; know me for the friend who never could or will forsake you, and who hopes to see you once more advanced to your former splendour.

L E T T E R XX.

LORD CASTLEDOWN TO SIR JAMES SEATON.

Hill-street.

FORTUNE has been too severe;
I could almost forgive her first
offence, but could quarrel with her
for

for the last jade's tricks she played me. No sooner have I given over whining for a false mistress, than this same jilting deity finds out other modes to torment me. She has robbed me of a valuable friend. I regret your absence, my dear *Seaton*, I regret it exceedingly; I never stood more in need of your sensible advice, your lively humour; the one would have assisted me in the management of my affairs, the other might have been my resource against a melancholy which at times oppresses me sadly. I shall always honour the memory of my father; I shall always think of his goodness to me, not with that kind of sentiment which generally attends an heir
just

just taking possession, but with the real sorrows of an affectionate son, who looks back on a thousand instances of paternal tenderness, with reverence and gratitude. Whilst I preserve in my own bosom a never-ceasing remembrance of the obligations I have to him, I mean not to be ostentatious in my griefs; I would rather conceal than expose them. I do more; I study to recover my usual chearfulness; I shun retirement, mix in public assemblies, and am already looked upon by the world as a follower of its customs, which are, I find, to lose the idea of our friends as soon as their remains are safely deposited. I am not, however, obliged to the world for flattering

tering my politeness at the expence of my feelings; that it is polite to banish sorrow, or, what may be more properly called the appearance of sorrow, will not admit a doubt. I could give you a striking instance of this truth—such an instance—but ought I to expose my mother? Let me reflect a moment—yes, I will tell you; why should I endeavour to conceal from you an impropriety with which, I dare answer, half the town are acquainted, without seeing it in the same light that I do; what would shock a son, might pass unnoticed, or, perhaps, be set down to the account of fortitude, by an unconcerned spectator.——When I arrived in London, my dear father had been
consigned

consigned to his peaceful grave one whole week, or, according to the calendar of our modern dowagers, seven long days. I was dispirited with my recent loss, sick with crossing the water in a severe storm, and tired to death by a journey which I had posted from Montpellier for the sake of expedition. In this situation I reached St. James's-square; it was about half an hour after nine in the evening. Before I came up to the house, an atch'ment over the door informed me, I was too late for the purpose which had hastened me home. I did not expect to find my mother in the deepest affliction, nor did I think my presence was absolutely necessary to her happiness; how-

however, it was my duty not to neglect a moment in presenting myself to her, and I did it without even waiting to change my dress. I passed the porter without speaking; I was so struck at my first entrance, that, for a moment, I had lost the power of speech; he knew me; I returned his low salute, by moving my hat, and proceeded to my mother's dressing-room, beckoning the servants in waiting, that I would neither be announced or followed; my visit was not of ceremony; common forms were, therefore, unnecessary. Guess, dear *Seaton*, guess, if you can, my astonishment, when, having gently opened the door half way, my mother's voice broke upon my ear,

word
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exclaiming, in a loud key, against her ill luck at being loo'd with Ace, King, and two other trumps. Petrified with surprize, I knew not what to do, whether to turn back or to go forwards; the recollection of my dear father made me determine on the former; but my mother hearing the lock turn, her eyes were drawn towards the door; she got a glimpse of my face; the cards dropt from her hands; she flew towards me; she caught me in her arms; her head fell upon my shoulder, and —. I will go no further; the scene was too ridiculous. God forgive me; but I could not help thinking that it would be much more natural to put her tears down to the

account of losing her game rather than her husband; if I am too severe, if I err against the respect I owe my mother, reflect on what I owe the memory of my beloved father, and the fault, if a fault I have committed, will diminish by this interesting reflection. Her Ladyship was importunate with me to make my appearance to her visitors; she had none with her but friends, she said; friends, whose goodness inclin'd them to waste their time in trying to divert her melancholy. You may suppose I did not comply with a request of this nature; she, finding it impossible to prevail, returned to her company; and I retired to my old apartment in a disposition better imagined

gined than described. I am now, Sir *James*, settled in a house of my own, in Hill-street; I made the purchase of *Hinchman*, furnished as it stood when you saw it, and good enough in all conscience for a bachelor; nor do I think I shall ever have occasion for a better on the score of matrimony. When the campaign is ended, and you return to England, repair hither, and heighten all my enjoyments, by partaking them; we will live together in blessed singleness, the envy of more than half the husbands in this metropolis; if ever we find ourselves in the way of temptation, a round of visits to such married families as I can lead you will restore us to our senses, or the

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Devil

Devil is stronger than I suspect.— Lady *Morpeth* is in town; her pert friend Lady *Ann Fostess* officiously began a conversation about her the other evening at Lady T——'s assembly; I baulked her ill-natured, ill-mannered expectations, by pretending not to hear what she said: I saw her vile design, and resolved to mortify her: nothing could do it so effectually as my silence and inattention to the subject; but for this single reason, I could, believe me I could have talked of Lady *Morpeth* with the self-same indifference as I could have done of any other woman.

It is much more difficult to think than speak with indifference; yet
even

even this I have accomplished; I shall neither seek or avoid a renewal of her Ladyship's acquaintance; I adore her sister Lady *Edgerton*; she is the best, the most amiable of her sex; for her sake then, wherever I meet Lady *Morpeth*, she shall receive those civilities from me, which, by her late behaviour, she has lost all claim to on her own account.—By whatever is most dear and valuable to me, I swear, I would fly the kingdom rather than meet her again, if I could not see her without danger; but, secure in a thorough knowledge of my heart, I set danger at defiance, and have no fears of a relapse.—I would have you forget every thing I said about

Emily in my first letter from Paris; it was written without consideration, in the heat of resentment, the rage of disappointed passion, and, perhaps too, of disappointed pride. Shew me the man who would not have felt himself hurt, putting love out of the question, to be left by his mistress for such a rival as *Morpeth*; shew me the man, and I will pronounce him to want the decent vanity common to human nature. The sentiments I expressed to you at the moment I was informed of her desertion, I now disavow; honour shall ever dictate my actions; honour was not consulted in my first determination; so far from endeavouring to disturb her married happiness,

ness, I should hate myself as a villain, could I even look with desire on the wife of another.——Whilst I was in France, I took pains to form two or three different attachments, not of a durable nature, but they answered my design, restored me to gaiety, served to while away my time, and put me into better humour with myself, consequently with the world, which, Misanthrope-like, I was beginning to turn my back upon in a pet of discontent. If, in this place, I give you a whimsical, unfought-for adventure, do me the justice not to think the repetition is meant to gratify my own vanity, but merely to make you smile.

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The *Duke de Oboyne* is unexceptionably the most polite, engaging, and affable of men; he did me the honour to distinguish me by a thousand kindneſſes; his palace was my home; I have told you before, he would not allow me to think of any other; I delighted in his converſation; and we lived together, like father and ſon, on terms of the ſtrict-eſt intimacy. When firſt our acquaintance commenced, he was much diſordered by an unfortunate breach between himſelf and the *Count de Poland*, his only brother; my friend was certainly very highly injured; and the Count muſt be obſtinate beyond conviction; but this is not to my ſtory.

I omit-

I omitted nothing in my power, to draw the Duke from that gloom by which I found him oppressed, and had the satisfaction to see my endeavours successful. He prevailed on me to put off my intended tour to Italy, and engaged me to accompany him to Montpellier. In our way thither, he proposed our spending a week with Lord *Danſwick*, an English nobleman, who, on account of an impaired constitution, has lived twenty years in the South of France. Lord *Danſwick* is a widower, with three daughters; when I have said the persons of these ladies are barely tolerable, I have said all that truth will admit. The good old man, their father, sees them with
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the eye of a ridiculous partiality, and discovers in them as many beauties as the most elaborate painter can possibly bestow on the favourite piece of his imagination. Whilst we were upon this visit, the emotions of mirth which politeness obliged me to suppress, have more than once, by shifting it under a violent fit of coughing, been as near sending me into the other world, as if I had been strangled with a halter under the hands of a common executioner. I could not hear the infatuated father repeating a hundred times a-day the appellations, charming girls, lovely creatures, sweet angels, without paying this sacrifice to folly. You know my humour; therefore,

'tis

'tis needless to tell you, I could not be in the house with *charming girls, lovely creatures, and sweet angels*, without giving them reason to suppose I did not receive their civilities with ingratitude. I vow to God, I never mentioned the word love to either of the divinities; my returns to their many attentions, were dealt out with the same equality as if I had been dividing one by one a parcel of sugar-plumbs amongst three children. I played, talked, and laughed with them all by turns; Lady *Susan*, and Lady *Margaret*, had not quite so much vanity as Lady *Fanny*; the two former returned my pleasantry with good humour, and thought no more about it; but my evil genius was

was at work, and whispered to the latter, that I had other intentions than merely to amuse them and myself, and that those intentions were in her favour. Behold now Lady *Fanny's* spirits reduced in the space of three days after our arrival, reduced from the highest notes of an organ, to the lowest squeak of a fiddle; she sought out unfrequented paths, she sighed, she languished, she almost ogled me into a downright passion; I saw the consequence of her affectation. Already the old Lord began to enquire what had caused so alarming a change in her disposition; her replies were attended with a sigh, a blush, or a tear; but it was always *nothing!* Indeed, my Lord, it is nothing.

nothing. I hate *such* nothing, they never fail to end in *something*. If I did not fly the house before this something came to light, her cursed folly would give me the detestable appearance of breaking through all the sacred laws of gratitude, hospitality, and honour. Can there possibly be a more villainous proceeding, than for a man to return the civilities of his entertainer, by robbing his daughter of her affections without a serious intention?

Before I go farther in my own defence, I must give you an idea of Lady *Fanny's* character, such as it visibly appeared to be on my first arrival at Lord *Danſwick's*. This I

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shall

shall do, that you may not accuse her of any real sensibility, or me of wanting that tenderness which any other woman in her situation unaffected must have commanded. Lady *Fanny* had not a grain of real sensibility: an occurrence which happened in the family a few hours after we joined them confirmed me in this opinion. The eye that could look unmoved on the distressed objects by which I saw her surrounded, could not belong to a heart enriched with sensibility. If she can love, I will venture to say, she can love only herself.—I will tell you, in very few words, why my aversion to her was unconquerable: A poor woman expired at her father's gate, an infant cry-

crying in her arms. She passed by at that moment; and, whilst her father and sisters were giving directions of humanity, the flinty-hearted creature turned away, humming an affected air:—True, as I hope for mercy. Is this enough, or is it necessary to give you more of this sweet angel? The Duke, who had observed the threatening storm clearly as myself, thought as I did, that we had best make our escape before it broke over our heads, but was highly diverted at the serious light in which I saw so ludicrous an affair, and rallied me without mercy. We soon after signified our intention to take leave, which was so strongly opposed by our kind host, that we

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could

could not refuse him another day, without giving him great offence. Just as this matter was settled, the Ladies descended from their dressing-rooms. Lord *Danwick* told them of what he called his and their misfortune, in not being able to make his villa so agreeable to his friends as might prevail on them to honour it with their presence longer than till the next day. Lady *Susan* and Lady *Margaret* came forward, paid us their compliments, and said many civil things on the occasion; but my languishing *Desdemona*,—confound her romantic airs!—with a loud cry, that sounded in my ears like the croaking of a raven, in a pretended fit, sunk down on the floor. Was
ever

ever man in such an awkward situation? The Duke and I stood planet-struck, gazing at each other; but compassion to the good old Lord drew us to her assistance; and, as we were approaching, the Duke whispered in my ear, lifting up his hands, *delicate distress!* My torment would not recover, nor would I assist in bearing out the corpse; it was removed by servants to her own apartment, (with every mark of rude health flourishing on her countenance) followed by the chief mourners of the family. Never more, as long as I breathe, never will I speak or look at an affected ugly coquette; these creatures are a thousand times more dangerous than a first-rate beauty.

beauty. Despair makes the former desperate, whilst the latter, conscious of her charms, and secure in their effect, takes no pains to draw in one poor fool, who may possibly withstand or escape her attractions. I do aver, there is more safety in making downright love to the one, than asking the other how she does, saluting her with your hat, or offering her your snuff-box. Instead of consoling me, the Duke laughed so immoderately, that I expected the corpse and all would have returned to have enquired the cause. I begged for heaven's sake he would spare me at least till we were fairly out of the house. I told him I really was
o ashamed of my own performance,
that

that I could not stand against his raillery. The more I talked, the more serious I looked, the louder were his peals of laughter; but in the midst of this scene, when I was too much mortified either to laugh or cry, a servant, with great solemnity, informed me his Lord desired the honour of speaking to me in the library. I could have gone to an execution with as little reluctance as I obeyed this summons, having a strong presentiment why my company was requested. I could have treated the artful woman with the contempt she merited; but to hurt the good mistaken father, by refusing his dowdy daughter, was hurting myself, and I appeared before him in
all

all the consciousness of a guilty confusion. Numberless apologies on the part of Lord *Danſwick* ushered in the important subject. He was just come from the chamber of his lovely amiable child; she had confessed to him, that Lord *Havenbrook*, by the most flattering attentions, had found the way to her heart; that the grief of being assured he was about to leave the house, without declaring his intentions, had occasioned her sudden disorder. Confound the witch; what a charge was here! I lost all patience; I could hear no more.—I am sorry, my Lord, very sorry, that I should be the cause of any uneasiness to a person who has made me his debtor on the score of many civilities;

ties ; but your Lordship must give me leave, in vindication of my own character, to assure you, whatever Lady *Fanny* might think proper to alledge, that I am perfectly innocent of having shewn her any particular attentions ;—such complaisance as a daughter of your Lordship's was intitled to, she has received in common with the other Ladies of your family ; my assiduities have not exceeded the bounds of respect ; upon my honour, my Lord, they have not.

He was too polite to push this matter further ; but said, he doubted not my honour or humanity ; he was concerned his daughter had acted so foolishly ; and was pleased to add, with
great

great good humour, that he regretted to give up all hopes of an alliance, which, if agreeable to me, would have made him happy the remainder of his days. I bowed my acknowledgments; it was impossible to return a verbal answer; and immediately we joined the Duke. I saw no more of the Divinities that evening; and the next morning by break of day, I thank Heaven, we turned our backs on their celestial abode.

I am tired, miserably tired of my subject; liking and disliking, in cases like this, have similar effects. I can think of nothing but the detestable Lady *Fanny*. So, dear *Seaton*, I bid you heartily farewell.

LETTER

L E T T E R XXI.

LADY ANN FOSTESS TO THE COUNTESS
OF HASSARD.

Cavendish-Square.

Congratulate, give me joy, Lady *Hassard*. Poh ! Why ask *you* for what I abound in already ? I am joy all over ; it sparkles in my eyes, and trembles at the very ends of my fingers—Such a conquest ! Well ; I have been so long the drudge of my own machinations, that any thing inferior I should have thought an insufficient reward for the many tedious nights the slavery of scheming has kept me waking, without reckoning the fidgets by day which have tormented me these three months ;
not

not that he swore, or even said, he loved me ; but attentions so visibel, looks so tender, a preference so mortifying, I saw it touched her to the very soul, I saw her chagrin through the thick mask of hypocrisy with which she tried to veil it.

Dear delightful *Castledown* ! Tho' you should baulk all my other expectations, I will still adore thee, for having gratified my revenge, for piqueing the vanity, the almost invincible vanity, of my bosom friend. —Now, must you be tediously dull, and horridly insipid, if you do not by this time perfectly understand the nature of my triumph, and the cause of my present exultation. I do not
take

take you to be either dull or insipid; yet, for your better information, I shall treat you with the whole pleasant rencounter; for, unless you are an absolute witch, you can never guess at the interesting particulars. According to my usual custom, I went this morning, between the hours of one and two, to visit my dear sweet Lady *Morpeth*. Well; I found her alone; we embraced with our accustomed cordiality; for the violence of our friendship has this effect, that we appear as rejoiced to see each other after one night's separation, as if we had not met for years or ages. I spoke to her of a picture-auction in Pall-mall; I asked if she would venture out, having

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myself

myself a passionate desire to see the collection, in which I had been told there were some pieces of great estimation. It seldom happens that I speak without design; but when I proposed this party, I had positively no design at all. I proposed it merely for the sake of variety. I found no company there to amuse me. She, as concealed as ever on the business of my heart; no hopes she would unbend; her subjects as insignificant as herself; so the consequence was, that I fell into a fit of yawning; and her insipid chit-chat, had I been bored with it half an hour, would have so vapoured me, that I should not have recovered in a century.— Oh! it was the luckiest, luckiest thought

thought that ever crossed my imagination: Fortune stood behind the curtain; I did not see her, but I certainly must have felt her directing influence.—Shall we go, my dear *Emily*? Why, yes! I have no objection, (with her odious drauling indifference) but must first make some little alteration in my dress: what a figure! (looking affectedly in the glass, her eyes half shut, as if to open them would fatigue her) positively a fright! I intended to have indulged this morning, so dressed only for my Lord; I make no excuse to you for my intolerable dishabille; you are always excepted, when I exclude my morning multitudes.—Dear creature! and I gave her an af-

Q 2

fectionate

fectionate nod : How happy, monstrously happy I am in the friendship of my sweet Countess! You look charmingly ; don't be any more out of humour with your shape ; let me die if your shape is not improved, and your skin is so divinely transparent, you are so beautiful, I would not have you unmarried again for the world. Will you give me your interest with *Castledown* ? Lord, my dear Lady *Ann*, how you talk ;—my interest—you know I gave up that an age ago ; but have done with your nonsense, child, I must hasten to dress. You will understand by this specimen, what an insensible I have to deal with. I would have persuaded her to go out in her dishabille.

No!

No! I could not prevail; she is as obstinate as insensible. Her hair, indeed, was sadly blouzed; I offered to set it right; again she crossed me, and chose rather to retire. I suppose she went out to lay on white and red, or why had she not asked me to go with her to her toilet? As you have seen the stuff she wrote me from Morpeth-Castle, you must remember, that amongst her other bright subjects, she had the assurance to entertain me with long accounts of an humble companion she had picked up, or her wise mother (much the same thing) had picked up for her; a mighty honour, truly, to make me the confidant of her creature's extraordinary excellencies.

Q₃

I expect

I expect she will next introduce me to her valet, and call him a nobleman in disguise. I did not chuse to quarrel with an idiot for an act of idiotism; but when she talked of bringing this mock Madam to town, I had no longer patience. I gave her to comprehend her toad-eater was not a companion for other people of distinction, who were not intitled to her secret services, or some hint like this; I do not exactly remember what. She had just sense enough to read my meaning, made an apology for being obliged, on the part of obedience, not to leave her behind in the country; and assured me I should be never incommoded with her presence.

Now

Now you must know, Lady *Hafsard*, the fool has really kept her word with such exactness, that I have not been able to get a glimpse of this odd body, since they came up till this morning, when my curiosity began to murmur, that it was withheld from a gratification so easily obtained; and at last my pride submitted to its instigations, which were become quite troublesome.—My dear, said I, you must let me see that *Olivia* I have heard of so often; if you have no use for her at your toilet, pray send her to me; there is no occasion, I find, for my absolutely avoiding her; she will know her distance, and perhaps I may be entertained by her tattle whilst

whilst your Ladyship is dressing.—
Indeed, Lady *Ann*, she replied,
haughtily, I don't know what you
mean by my having no use for *Olivia*;
she is not my attendant; whenever
she sits by me when I am at my toi-
let, I am pleased with her conversa-
tion, and think myself favoured;—
I shall send her to you, but must de-
fire, my dear, you will not receive
her in any less respectable light than
that of my friend, of whose merit I
am every day more sensible. I shall
be disappointed when you have seen
her, if you do not confess her wor-
thy of my friendship. Did you
ever hear any thing half so insolent?
It was not my business to drop her
here, or she should have experienced
my

my resentment; besides, I was resolved to see her creature; and, to avoid a disappointment, did not think proper to dispute the mode in which I was to receive her. As soon as she turned her back, I carelessly extended myself on the sofa, full of wrath, which was mixed with a degree of impatience for the appearance of this important personage, on whose account I had been so discomposed by the saucy Countess. The door opened; my curiosity was doubled; I turned my eyes eagerly that way, and seeing one of the most elegant female figures that can be imagined, instead of the little mushroom I expected, I was actually rising to receive her—half ashamed
to

to be discovered in my negligent position. Fortunately, she spared me the confusion of so absurd a condescension, by saying, with a modest air,—which, I must confess, was attended by a *je ne sçai quoi* that startled me,—I hope, Madam, I am not an intruder; I am here to receive your Ladyship's commands, at the request of Lady *Morpeth*, and should be sorry if my presence were to disturb your ease in any respect. My countenance altered; I looked her over from head to heel with a scornful air of contempt. Not in the least, Miss, said I, resuming my former posture, from which I was but half risen. When I saw how extremely beautiful she was, I could not

not think of any other appellation than *Miss*, insignificant enough to shew my disgust at seeing a dirt-sprung girl apeing the graces and dignity of fashion. You may fit down, *Miss*; I have forgot your name; pray put me right? My name, Madam, is *Olivia Mildmay*. And so child, you are under the protection, that is, you live with Lady *Morpeth*. I looked her full in the face; a tear started at my supercilious glance. I fancy you have been unfortunate; but at present you can certainly want for nothing; I have long known your Lady; we have been intimate from children; and have often contributed to raise little people from distress. Lady *Morpeth*
is

is a charitable, good woman, Mrs. *Olivia*; I could repeat many instances of her feelings for *poor bodies*, if I did not suppose you very sufficiently convinced of her goodness, not to need any other precedent. I spoke this, my dear, merely to try if she had the least spark of that humility, which should belong to her dependent station; but could discover nothing like it. Instead of smiling and looking pleased at the character I had given her Lady, she pretended to sigh, as if she had been born a person of rank; and a faint blush, which became her infinitely more than there was occasion for, just tinged the middle of her cheeks. To tell you the truth, Lady *Haffard*, I would give the

the universe to command just such a blush when I next meet *Castledown*: her eyes, were full of something—I don't know what—I cannot define it—such a bustle as she threw into them, I almost expected they would have spoke; their odious animation came the nearest to speech of any thing I ever beheld. Bless me, child, what ails you, cried I? Why your eyes are quite terrible; are you seized with any sudden disorder?—I beg your pardon, Madam, returned the chit, with a smile of contemptuous mildness; I am perfectly well—perfectly composed—my heart and eyes are in unison; the latter express the sentiments of the former; and, if your Ladyship were acquainted with their

language, you would discover nothing very terrible in either. Indeed, young woman, you speak mighty well; pray go on; I admire your composure—and I laughed; I pretend to no skill in eyes: Be so kind, child, to tell me in plain English, what your's meant to have said?—They meant, Madam, to have explained, that I applied with all humility your late application: Had I neglected to do this, the goodness of your endeavours to awaken me to a full sense of my poverty, would have failed in the well-meant design, for which, I presume, your Ladyship intended it; perhaps I have been unfortunate; perhaps too, in my present happy situation, I might possibly have forgot

got

got my misfortunes. Lady *Ann Fossefs* has condescended to rouse me from my unguarded security; she has set before me, in characters I cannot mistake, how precarious the happiness of a friendless orphan, who is supported by charity. I thank you, Madam, for teaching me this humiliating lesson.

At this moment Lord *Morpeth* entered; and, for the first time in my life, I saw him push his prim face into the room without wishing him at —: no matter where; but now I really rejoiced that he came so opportunely to my relief. I was got into a *tête-a-tête*, from which I felt I should not be able to extricate myself

with becoming dignity. I confess that the assumed airs of this little, low, mean, insignificant, this dependent, this creature, this toad-eater to the woman in the world I most despise, had the power to make me small in the sight of my own importance. I felt my face glow. I should die with shame, could I think she had observed my confusion. I took pains to avoid her pointed looks, and carelessly trifled with my muff the whole time she was addressing herself to me. If ever I bring such another dilemma on my own head, may I suffer the punishment my folly would deserve! My curiosity should have perished, had I known its gratification would have been the means of humbling me

me so egregiously as I have been humbled; I detest the subject; and, to make my vanity full amends, shall hasten to another, which is the superstructure on which I build the completion of all my wishes. A dirty cit comes for his money; I must break off to send my steward orders to dispatch him.

CONTINUATION.

Lady *Morpeth* did not affront me by making the fair, conceited *plebeian* one of our party to the auction: her Lord offered to be our escort: She looked as if she had rather trust to Providence for a protector, but did not dare to refuse him. Charmed,

transported by a proposal so unexpected, I gave him a thousand acknowledgments, for the favour he intended us; I said, and I said it in the very sincerity of my heart, that there was not a man in the world I should advance to the honour of being my escort on this occasion in preference to his Lordship. Can you doubt the truth of this assertion, or can you suspect me of the wicked design to alienate his trusty heart from the Countess. No, no, Lady *Haffard*, on the contrary, instead of using any arts to divide the gentle pair, all the arts, all the contrivances I am mistress of, shall generously be employed in drawing them still closer to each other. I would,

would, if possible, pull the blessed knot so very, very tight, that their persons at least should be inseparable, however far their minds may be asunder. Whenever I attend Lady *Morpeth* to any place of public entertainment, the company of her Lord would make me feel quite comfortable;—such a husband, planted at her elbow, will give me ample security for her good behaviour; it shall be no fault of mine, if he does not often grace our parties with his presence. I am so much his Lordship's debtor, for going with us this morning, that he is intitled to my best offices; nor shall his property in the bauble he has purchased, be invaded by a former bidder, if my unwearied diligent
atten-

attentions can prevent the damage:
 Yes, I am resolved to protect his honour at the expence of my whole precious time: No engagement, no business, no pleasures, shall call me one moment off my duty, if I should find it necessary to mount a constant guard of observation. Pish! I have all the reason in the world to suppose it will be quite unnecessary; my sweet *Castledown's* indifference could not be counterfeited; it was neither scornful or studied; his whole behaviour was politely cold, and negligently civil; in short, it was just what I could have wished it to be.

You, my dear, you who are even better versed than myself in the thousand

and intricacies of deceit, tell me, I beseech you, if, in all its various windings, your penetration can discover one spark of love, one ember of preference for Lady *Morpeth*, concealed under appearances so unfavourable to her, so favourable to myself. I shall be monstrously disappointed, if you do not confirm my sanguine hopes, amounting almost to certainty, that every combustible of this dangerous tendency is absolutely extinguished. Hear, then, the particulars:—Honour my discernment, and give me your best wishes, that my eyes may light up a passion in the breast of *Castledown*, superior to any that has ever yet burnt for my rival.

Before

Before you can be a competent judge of what is what, I must tell you all about it. We had scarce been three minutes in the auction-room, when Lord *Morpeth* desired we would follow him to look at a picture, that, in his opinion, was extremely well worth our notice;—his opinion did not appear to be singular; it was supported by the multitude, who eagerly pressed to that part of the room at which it was fixed. I am a great admirer of fine paintings, and was horridly vexed at not being able to get near enough to see the piece to tolerable advantage. My mortification at being so disagreeably incommoded, I was expressing, in a tone that I believe was neither

ther striking for its affability or good humour, when *Castledown*, who was standing within the circle, happened to turn his head towards us; he saw my difficulty to proceed, and stepped forward to offer his assistance. Lady *Morpeth* he had not yet perceived; she was standing behind me, leaning on the arm of her husband; it was myself who placed her in that enviable picturesque representation of sweet domestic felicity. Dear Lady *Morpeth*, forgive my freedom; your situation demands particular caution; rest on your Lord's arm, we shall be strangely pushed about; your foot may slip; come, come, for once do not mind erring against fashion. I whispered this loud enough for the person

person I intended it should reach : He smiled, thanked me for my obliging hint ; and I had the pleasure of seeing her chained to her oar, notwithstanding her utmost resistance, attended with such looks, directed against my officiousness, as seemed to threaten me with her everlasting displeasure. Well, as I was saying, when the divine *Castledown* approached me, he had not observed her Ladyship ; he offered his hand to conduct me through the crowd. I accepted it, you may be assured ; and turning my head exultingly over my shoulder, I said, with an air of triumph, I have no scruple of leaving you Lady *Morpeth*, under so good protection as your husband. I would
not

not advise you to follow us ;—the heat will oppress you. Since I am so near Lord and Lady *Morpeth*, said my charming, charming *Castledown*, with an indifference that enchanted me, I shall be ambitious of paying them my respects ;—will your Ladyship do me the honour of presenting me to your friends ?—You can certainly want no introduction, my Lord, replied I, smiling ; then turning to the Earl and Countess, —your Lordship may go forward—your own merits can never fail of procuring you a gracious reception from every woman, and on every occasion. The last severe words I did not speak with my tongue ; but if I mistake not, they were expressed to the purpose, by still

more eloquent language.—Heavens! what inimitable grace, what spirited dignity, informed his animated countenance, as he paid Lady *Morpeth* the distant offerings of civility!—Not a sigh of regret—not a glance of reproach—alarmed my apprehensions; all was profound composure, and determined coolness. With the same easy unembarrassed air, he accosted her clumsy Lord, who stood twirling his thumbs, and looking as if he could not help it. I could die with laughing at the contrast—such a contrast, person, and manners, O! it was charming, infinitely charming; yet *Emily* had too much artful pride to let me see that she drew any comparison in favour of the former:
well,

well, well, no matter; I forgive her art on this single consideration, that I know her soul must be full of a subject, which, in the moments of reflection, will sufficiently torment her. We parted friends, my Lord, (said the divine *Castledown*, when he offered his fine-turned hand to the acceptance of *Morpeth*) we meet, I hope, on the same terms; your friendship will be a considerable addition to my happiness; for the continuance of your Lordship's felicity, my wishes are sincere and ardent. The heavy-headed Earl seemed pleased; his clouded brow, which certain conjectures had overspread, cleared in an instant: dispositions the most suspecting must, sometimes, give way

to conviction; infatuation itself could not have mistaken expressions so strongly marked with indifference: he saw he had nothing to fear; he met his advances with tolerable grace, accepted his friendship, and appeared to have forgot this *Adonis* had ever been his rival. Our conversation soon became general; *Castle-down* supported it with a gay unconcern, a natural vivacity that shewed a mind at ease, and a heart perfectly disincumbered from its former ridiculous attachment. He said a thousand obliging things to me, and looked more than he said: in his attentions to Lord *Morpeth*, he was exceedingly polite, nor did his silence to the languishing Countess give me
any

any cause to suspect he distinguished her even by resentment. When he spoke to me, it was on topics flattering to my judgment: To her he talked of her sister Lady *Edgerton*, and other such trifles. If you are displeased at my imperfect sketch of conquest, tell me so in your next; for positively at this time I can write no more.

My impatience to visit the poor mortified Countess is ungovernable: The instant I am dressed, for my evening excursions, I flash upon her in all the exultation of victory.

198 COUNT DE POLAND.

L E T T E R XXII.

OLIVIA TO MRS. OSMOND.

South Audly-Street.

YOU command me, dearest Madam, to speak no more of obligations; you tell me you are satisfied with the assurances I have given you of endeavouring to deserve your friendship.* If my tongue is imposed silence, if I am obliged to restrain my pen, from expressing the emotions of my heart, still I will find out methods to demonstrate my gratitude. When for a moment I forget the interest of your happiness, or suffer my vigilance to slumber where
my

* These Letters ~~do~~ not appear.

my watchfulness might ward off a blow levelled at your peace, or threatening to the honour of your family, that moment may I be thrown from your esteem, that moment may I be a bankrupt even in hope! may the idea of every tender friend, may every comfortable reflection be blotted from my memory! be it faithful only to such events in my past life as I least wish to remember! may Heaven itself, repenting of its goodness, no longer make me the object of its care; or you, my dear Mrs. *Osmond*, the instrument of its divine protection! May I return to all the horrors of that situation from which you raised me, without innocence to support me against the attacks of poverty,

verty, against the efforts of despair! Shall not the comforts of my benefactress, be my comforts? Shall not her disquietudes be my disquietudes? It would be presumptuous in me to examine unto the part you have assigned me; the rectitude of your heart is the best security I can have for the propriety of my actions.— There was but one circumstance that would have put it out of my power to convince you of my obedience; fortunately that one has not occurred. Had Lady *Morpeth* made me the confidant of her sentiments, and those sentiments been derogatory to virtue, on no consideration could I have submitted either to act the part of a spy and betray the trust she
 reposed

reposed in me, or to have lived the guilty partner of her inclinations; my own reputation, low as I am reduced by fortune, requires that I should cautiously guard it equally from the imputation of treachery, and the appearance of levity. A young woman who will condescend to share the criminal secrets of her superior, becomes a partner in her indiscretions:—in such a case, I must have declined the honour of her Ladyship's protection; I must have secured my peace and character, by leaving Lord *Marpeth's* family:—it would have been my only resource against my either receiving or betraying her confidence. To have connived at guilt, or, assassin-like,

to

to have turned those weapons she had put into my hands against her own bosom, my soul would have disclaimed. I thank God! my good, kind Mrs *Osmond*, I thank God! I have none of those difficulties to deter me from a strict observance of your commands, and shall feel no repugnance in obeying them minutely. Hitherto I have not been able to discover any thing faulty, or even exceptionable in the conduct of your daughter. Indeed, Madam, I flatter myself you have drawn a too hasty conclusion from the eagerness her Ladyship expressed for coming to town. Your apprehensions have also been inflamed by a vile officious incendiary, whose production

tion is evidently that of envy, jealousy, or some such mean degrading principle.

I am so much confined to my own apartment, as well from inclination, as because Lady *Morpeth* does not importune me to mix in company, that I have yet had few opportunities of fixing my suspicions on any particular person.—There is a certain lady of quality they have glanced over. Chance once threw her in my way. She is a constant visitor at this house, and professes a romantic friendship for Lady *Morpeth*, which, with some other circumstances, has made her the object of my no very favourable observation.

tion. I have experienced her talent for giving pain. A person of distinction, who, unprovoked, can calmly insult the unfortunate, wants that generosity of soul, that humanity of disposition, which sets the lowliest child of poverty above the debasement of being suspected; and I think I do not judge harshly, in supposing such a person would not spare even the tender bosom of a parent. Lord and Lady *Morpeth*, I assure you, Madam, are not the most dissatisfied couple in the world; there is a great deal of complaisance observed on her side; I hope time will effect much more. The exertion of a little preference, a little tenderness, will at any time warm those
 seeds

seeds of gentleness, which nature has sown in the heart of Lord *Morpeth*. I am convinced it will be in the Countess's power, not only to mould him as she pleases, but also to eradicate that reserve which has hitherto marked the features of his temper with unpleasing—at least what the world have called unpleasing—characters. His Lordship, before he was connected with Lady *Morpeth*, was arrived at that time of life when it is most difficult to unbend the mind, or new-model a disposition that the rust of a single life had rather inclined to that of a humourist. Unmarried men contract a thousand habits, which, in a more social situation, would have been avoided: for

want of domestic companions, they are apt to consult their own humour, on every occasion, and, perhaps, that humour often misleads them against their better judgment. Lord *Morpeth's* soul is rich in kindness, benevolence, and humanity. I should be the most ungrateful creature breathing, if I did not acknowledge those excellent qualities, which, in his whole behaviour to me, I have so abundantly experienced. The Countess has quite recovered her health and strength: she was yesterday presented at court: her lovely person could receive no addition from ornaments, though, I believe, the magnificence of her appearance was scarcely ever equalled. From the moment she

left

left her dressing-room to the moment she stepped into her chair, the good Earl's eyes never wandered, they were fixed on her charming face with such expressions of transport, as if she alone had been the deity of his adoration, the being on whose smile depended his felicity; neither did he confine his admiration to silence, or her Ladyship seem dissatisfied with his praises. I sometimes hope she is not insensible to her Lord's attentions; at others, she obliges me to change my opinion; but I have never yet had the least cause to suspect that the preference she neglects to shew him is given to another. I scarcely ever saw, read, or heard of, a woman having so absolute a command
over

over the passions of the other sex, that could receive the devoirs of a lover, or the effusions of a husband's fond approbation, with equal unconcern. If your daughter is not affected by the unwearied assiduities of her Lord, trust me, Madam, her heart is fortified with the same impregnable indifference against the attacks of a lover, even though that lover should be Lord *Castledown*.

Ever since I received your first commands, I have made the intricate windings of Lady *Morpeth's* heart my constant study, and think I may now venture to pronounce, there are but few shades by which its virtues are obscured; she wants sensibility
but

but on one occasion; you, my dearest Mrs. *Osmond*, will be best able to define for what good purposes Providence has furnished the Countess's heart with so small a proportion of susceptibility.

Lord *Castledown* is often the subject of Lord *Morpeth's* conversation; he speaks of him without reserve; he declares him the most sensible, elegant, and accomplished of any of the young nobility, admires his improvements, enlarges even on his personal attractions, and pronounces him a man of honour. The Countess hears him with as little emotion as if he was talking of a brother; she neither affirms nor contradicts;

she affects not to avoid hearing his praises, nor does she listen to them with any degree of pleasure; she is never less discomposed; not a sigh or a blush contradicts the reality of her composure. Repeated visits have already passed between the two Earls. Lady *Morpeth* has sometimes partaken of those from Lord *Castledown*; but I cannot discern the least alteration either in her humour or spirits after she has been in his company. I am very particular, my dear Madam, that you may restore peace to your soul, from knowing circumstantially on what reasons I found my hopes that your daughter's conduct will give you no essential cause for unhappiness.

Her

Her Ladyship told me this morning, with a lively pleasure that charmed me, of your intentions to meet her at Morpeth-Castle. She speaks of you and of her father with unusual tenderness; her heart, I am sure, is innocent; and I make no doubt, but those blossoms of the mind will expand themselves in a later season, which, in the spring of her life, have been nipped by a too early and too intimate intercourse with a world, whose examples are pernicious to the principles of strict rectitude.

Trust, Madam, the accounts I send you; for even your ease, the dearest to me of all other considerations, I would not flatter at the expence

expence of truth! If my intelligence can have the power to alleviate your afflicting apprehensions, how great the reward of my obedience! Few, very few, confer obligations like *Mrs. Osmond*. There are none whose gratitude and affection to their benefactress can equal that of her *Olivia*.

L E T T E R XXIII.

LORD CASTLEDOWN TO SIR JAMES SEATON.

Hill-street.

SUPPOSE, dear *James*, a young man, of tried abilities, with whom you are well acquainted, should form a design of following your lead, and enter into the service of

of his country : Would you encourage his intentions, or have you a vacancy to offer in your own regiment, by which he may climb the ladder of preferment? Pity, the best materials in the world for making a great General should be buried in the grave of common acquirements, or moulder in the lap of luxury.— Were I even at this time of day to grasp the brown musket, nothing less than a monument erected to my fame, amongst the other heroes in Westminster-Abbey, would satisfy my ambition. He who can regulate his own actions may well discipline an army; but he who can gain a conquest over his own passions need not fear an host of armed men.

Were

Were you to see Lady *Morpeth*, in all her improved charms, with every dazzling ornament which can set them off to advantage; were you to feel the tender sentiments I once experienced for that fair emblem of inconstancy, you would not wonder at the intoxication with which I found my prowess. Had her ingratitude left me quite so much the master of my own inclinations, as I vainly boasted, I should have had little merit in treating her with that distant respect, her character as a married woman exacted. I deceived myself when I said I could see *Emily* with indifference; the first time chance threw her in my way, the deception dropped; but where it dropped, honour

nour slept in, and propped my sinking fortitude. I now lay the whole weight of my feelings securely on its unbending strength; and it has since supported me in various rencounters with my too lovely enemy.

At court, at my mother's, at Lady G——'s assembly, I have since met the blooming Countess, I have seen her more than once in her own house; but not a word, a look, has escaped me, which, in the cooler moments of reflection, I could wish unsaid, unlooked: Whatever conflict my affections sustain, my actions shall not reproach me.—I often wonder, that, after the incontestable proof of insensibility she gave me on our return

return from a certain expedition, which was to have ended in a union the most lasting, the most tender,—I more than wonder, I am astonished, how my reason could be so much blinded by passion, as not to discover that I was only the dupe of my own partiality. Faith! I can give you no account of the beginning or end of an attachment so ridiculous. I only suppose it was begun at her eyes, and hope it will subside by the force of unprejudiced judgment. *Nature* formed her person beautiful, to engage my admiration; *Art* endowed her mind with its thousand deceptions, to make me curse my folly. Lunatic-like, I drew closer the bandage of infatuation, by which

which my sight was obscured ; I decked the soul of my *Emily* with perfections which never existed in her heart, and, fool that I was, worshipped the idol of my own inventive fancy. I allow she is still beautiful as ever ; that I cannot yet behold her charms without feeling their influence ; but I am no longer her slave. Were she a widow tomorrow, she is the last woman in the universe who should a second time impose on my senses. No : if ever again I entertain a serious thought of matrimony, my wife must be mistress in reality of those delicacies, those refinements, the shadows of which I have hitherto mistaken for substance.

We are both, I believe, mighty easy about each other; she seems already to have forgotten that I have ever been more to her than a common acquaintance; neither conscious shame, nor agitating sensibility, affects her composure. Well, it is all for the best. I am but a man. I would not have her less insensible for the world. If we can resist such temptations as fall in our way, there is no necessity to wish for greater merely to combat with. A man may sometimes judge of his own strength; but weakness often lie concealed under self-approbation, which it might be dangerous to call from their hidden recesses.—Enough of Lady *Morpeth*;—her husband did
not

not use me well in supplanting me; after knowing my attachment, and the difficulties by which I was surrounded; yet I heartily forgive, nay, I can even thank him for the unintended service he has done me. Had *Emily* been worthy of my heart, the refusal of his would have been grateful to my affections; his pretensions, then, could only have added to her value, consequently to my happiness; but, as she never deserved the preference I gave her, my obligations to him are not the less for removing my deception.

Lord *Morpeth's* character is not so unpleasing as I have joined with many others in believing;—he has

U 2 gained

gained in his understanding, appearance, and address, by his connection, more than I lost when he obstructed mine. It has generally been allowed that love is a polisher of the roughest manners; but I should as soon have expected a diamond could have communicated its own lustre to the slave that digs it from the mine, or to the artificer who moulds it into form, as that *Morpeth* should adopt in any degree a propriety, an ease, an elegance, in the mode of his behaviour, so foreign from what made him the subject of your, of my, of every body's dislike and ridicule. His Countess is certainly mistress of the graces; yet the change is wonderful.— I know you are not exactly of my opinion.

opinion. You never would acknowledge that my *Emily* was the most beautiful of women ; but, for once, do not oppose this assertion—prithee do not ; my vanity is already humbled ; this is the only support it has to rest on ;—if she is not beautiful, if she is not mistress of the graces, how the devil came I to be so bewitch'd ? Before I give up my point, find me out another that can excel what Miss *Osmond* was when you last saw her, and I am still open to conviction : but if to her personal charms, those of the mind, the heart, the soul, should be united, I charge you, shew her to me unmarried, unengaged, her affections immaculate as her innocence, difficult to gain ;

U 3

but

but when gained, lively, ardent, unchangeable. Bring your angel in opposition to my woman, and you shall find my submission not inferior to the acknowledgements with which I shall load you. I am too much fired with the ideal image, not to experience the danger of more than a relapse into all my former dotage, should such a Divinity as I have described cross the path of my present tranquility.

Was ever man so whimsically inspired!—Let me indulge my delirium. The divine object of my brain stands this moment before the eye of my creative imagination.—She is robed in white, unsullied as
her

her complexion, which knows no impure blemish, except the bloom of opening roses, faintly blushing, can be called impurity;—her eyes are not of commanding black, but modest, blue, and never raised to any but myself,—sparkling with transport, or languishing in sweetness; from the ardent glances of presumptuous gazers, they are guarded by long, dark lashes, that rise or fall at the instigation of prudence, love, or virtue, who tell me they are the constant inhabitants of her bosom, that they form her thoughts, govern her actions, and regulate her every motion. Her hair is auburn, uncurled, unpowdered, unfeathered, rich only in its own natural beauties; in

in her dress, she only submits to decent custom; vanity is banished from her toilet; good sense conducts her thither; taste, simplicity, neatness, are her three assistant graces; and, when attired by them, humility leads her forward. She is supported on one side by fortitude, on the other by smiling innocence;—youth, vivacity, with all their train of gentle, generous, tender passions, revel before her airy footsteps. What hands! what arms! what proportion! what universal elegance! Thus adorned, thus attired, thus led, thus preceded, she comes towards me. Take care, *Castledown*, lest a second time, Pygmalion-like, thou fallest a victim to thy own creation.—I will not

write

write another syllable.—Yes, I will tell you, that I go this moment to South-Audly-street. I shall, whilst warmed with the phantom I have raised, see Lady *Morpeth*—see her with indifference, and prove the validity of my new visionary attachment. Farewell.

L E T T E R XXIV.

FROM THE SAME TO THE SAME.

Hill-street.

MY military ardour is at end;—farewel posthumous fame;—I would not give a rush for monuments erected to my memory, lasting as time itself, conscious as I am of not deserving

deserving the distinction. I resign my truncheon to any other, more likely than I am to wield it with true heroism. I a General; I discipline regiments; I encounter a host of armed men, who am not fit to carry a halbert in the corps of discretion! No, no, my friend; a settled life now terminates the view of my ambition; I have not a wish, a desire, beyond it. Despise me if you can; I have been in danger; a miracle has saved me; I am come off with honour; but more, a thousand times more, in love than ever.—Full of my enchanting vision, I went, as I told you I intended, to South Audlystreet. Lord *Morpeth* was not at home. I asked for the Countess, and
was

was shewn to her dressing-room. I entered with a vacant, unembarrassed air. I believe I was hardly yet roused from my delicious reverie; my mind was in strange confusion; there are presentiments not to be accounted for by us short-sighted mortals; something whispered me my Divinity was near; my eyes glanced casually round the apartment, as if unsatisfied with the objects before them, and at length they fixed on Lady *Morpeth*. Yes, they fixed on *Emily*; I never saw her look so lovely; my mind was never more open to soft impressions; and, at that moment, I thought I felt for her all those ardent emotions I was soon to experience for another. This was the first time I had seen Lady *Morpeth* without

without company since my return to England; that impertinent, fluttering, busy coquette, Lady *Ann Fosters*, being ever perched at her elbow:— had she now been at her usual station, I should have blessed her vigilance; but fortune was not so much my friend. I found the lovely Countess alone; a melting softness heightened her attractions; and, to complete her conquest, (add, if you please, my fall) celestial rosy red flushed on her cheek. Trembling she received my enquiries after her health; her whole form was animated. Confounded unlucky this! I could have stood against her mere personal charms; but an appearance of sensibility, so little expected, I was

not

not prepared to encounter. I caught part of her confusion ; it was several minutes before either of us could converse on the most common topics without hesitation, nor was it long that our conversation continued in the channel of indifference ; my evil stars were at work to overthrow my best resolves ; they led me imperceptibly to speak of former scenes, and it soon became interesting.——

Seaton! she is virtuous, strictly virtuous ; it was not love, but the fear of my reproaches, by which she was affected, even to tears affected. Softened, as I tell you, the only favour I could obtain from her, was a half promise, which (let me do her the justice to say) I almost tortured from

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her,

to give me a quarter of an hour's conversation at *Cornellys'* masquerade next Thursday.

Condemn me not harshly; you have my thoughts undisguised as they ascend to Heaven; it is from them only that I am condemned even in my own opinion; for, though the force of passion hurried me to lengths discretion forbade; yet, believe me, I never insulted her ear with a declaration improper for the wife of Lord *Morpeth*, or ever formed a design derogatory to her, to his, or to my own honour. I own myself then charmed at her consciousness of having injured me; I thought, but I now confess it was an erroneous supposition, that,
without

without criminality, I might indulge myself publicly or in private, with seeing and conversing with her. The false colouring with which I glossed over the inclination I found in my heart at this moment to keep up an intimacy with Lady *Morpeth*, made me see no impropriety in my request for next Thursday; it was formed in consequence of the innocent gratification my senses received in the present interview. By all that is most dear and sacred to me, I solemnly protest, a wish more guilty than seeing and talking to her without constraint was not formed even in my ideas. I dare not answer for my fallibility in a less delicate situation; but in this, my honour was too nearly concerned;

cerned; neither can I say when my unmeaning gallantry might have ended, had not Heaven opportunely dispatched one of its fairest ministering angels of grace, peace, and love, to my rescue from folly. Just as I had thanked her for having granted my petition, the lock softly turned, softly the door opened, and in glided the—gentle guardian of my peace. Whilst this gentle guardian restored peace to my bosom, I found a vacancy there, which convinced me, however misled by former appearances, that I had been the master of my own heart till that moment.

In the history of my attachment to Lady *Morpeth*, let these errata be inserted;

inserted; for *passion*, read *deliberate admiration*; for *transports*, read *the endearing intercourse of friendship formed in infancy*.——I am mad, absolutely distracted; I have found my imaginary angel-woman—call her what you will now; but if you should ever have the honour to approach her it must be by the title of *Castledown*, or you will see me the most miserable of men. Is it impossible that this was not our first meeting? Was it possible that we knew each other before our parents ushered us into this world of confusion? or why did my soul fly to meet her with all the eagerness, friendship, ardour, of a long-established connection? Why does it now inform me, that my passion for

X 3

her

her will end only with my existence? I know nothing of who or what she is, except from sympathy, which tells me she is every thing in the world to me, and that without her the world would be a desert. If ever in my life I have done a good action, Providence now means to reward me with the brightest gem in its treasury. She must, she shall be mine. I would not lose the dear, delightful hope of calling her my own, I would not lose it for millions. Wish you a representation of her person,—look for it in the picture I faintly sketched in my preceding letter. Nothing is beautiful, or the reverse, but by comparison. I once thought my colouring too high for the moderate pencil of nature;—
my

my judgment was that of a novice ; I was not well enough acquainted with the works of that great artist, to know how infinitely she can excel the utmost sketch of human invention. The liveliest efforts of my imagination faded in presence of the wonder she this day produced, to convince me of her superiority. Every look I presumed to steal on her masterly production filled me with conviction ; I looked I trembled, I was confounded at my own presumption. What I had drawn of perfection was only a copy, a poor, faint copy ; but in point of description, the likeness was so striking, that when the lovely original flashed upon me, I should have regarded her appearance as the
conti-

continuance of my transporting vision, had not the advantage on the side of reality been so very conspicuous, that I could not avoid seeing myself an humble imitator, without a view to imitation. I never before saw that woman, tho' I honour the sex in general, who could furnish materials of mind and person, to set me at work on that business; my fancy supplied the deficiency; I modelled a female; I called it perfect, and became enamoured of my own performance. When I saw *Olivia*, which was the only name by which Lady *Morpeth* distinguished this phenomenon, I staggered with surprize, and at one view confessed myself a dauber. More virtues, more graces,
than

than fiction had taught me to place around my ideal Divinity, crowded the eyes, and attended the sober, modest step of my soul's conqueror; their presence was so visible, that speech or action were of no importance in revealing them. After the experience I have paid for, I think I should be delicately cautious in the choice of a wife, yet could I with propriety have offered my hand this morning to *Olivia*; without a single question of who, or what she was, without waiting to discover other excellencies than what her appearance ascertained, I would have led her to the altar. Thither I will yet lead her, if her heart is not impenetrable to the warmest, tenderest

tenderest assiduities, that charms like her's ever inspired. Now, would I give half my fortune to be insured success. What a fatiguing road of doubts, perplexities, suspense, have I to travel through, before I drink at the stream of certainty! If dame Hope refreshes me on my journey, I shall go on well enough; but unless I keep her constantly in my eye I inevitably faint beneath the burden I carry; what can gall a man of sensibility equal to a load of unrequited affection, of which he cannot divest himself? My affections are fixed as fate; I am doomed to love her whether she be kind or cruel. I thought, (but it may be only fancy; we often imagine we
foresee

foresee events, which, were they really to happen, would most afflict us,) I thought my angel, as she passed her victim, glanced her eye over him, her eye beaming the mild lightning of virtue, but on me it seemed directed with a look of anger bordering on contempt. No, no; don't regard a word I say; I am too much her's to be myself; I don't know what I say; rather believe me an ingenious self-tormentor, than that I excited scorn in a heart where nothing less than ruling with absolute power will keep me from a state of desperation. I was misled; my mind was not in a situation to stand her pure examination, when I thought she looked displeased. I saw her not with
my

my own, but with the eyes of my conscience, which was a little incumbered at that moment, by my having introduced a subject to Lady *Morpeth*, which, of all others, I ought to have avoided, and which her presence interrupted. What needless trouble have I given myself: she could not be offended with me; she could not see into my former thoughts; and had she penetrated into those I now entertained, she would have found nothing there but her own sweet image; surely that could not have created disgust; I am quite easy; I have misconstrued the expression of her animated countenance to my own disadvantage — Why should she hate me? I will oblige

oblige her to return my passion; her soul is not the seat of indifference; I will oblige her to return it, or expire at her feet. Forbid it fate, that a second *Morpeth* should cross my purpose. I keep my appointment religiously on Thursday; I keep it from other motives than those on which it was first founded; I have a thousand things to say to Lady *Morpeth*; I will try to make her my friend; her friendship may greatly assist my design. Had you seen my *Olivia*;—she must, she shall be *my Olivia*;—had you heard the music of her voice; in short, had you my feelings, you would not wonder that I should lose half my senses,—you would only be surprized that I retain the

least spark of reason. Captivating creature! Where has she been concealed, that I should never have seen, never have heard of her before? The innocence, the simplicity, the modesty, that accompanies all she says, all she does, would lead you to believe, she had been her whole life sheltered in retirement from the baneful blast of a corrupt, vicious, dissipated world. Again; her knowledge in all which that world produces of good, great, or amiable, forbids the supposition: delicacy of sentiment, grace of diction, persuasive eloquence, are all her own.— You will ask, perhaps, how in one short hour I could discover so many perfections? You are no lover, or
you

you will spare me the question; she spoke but little; that little charmed, it more than charmed, it transported me; I saw, I felt the rest. I am going to close my letter, throw myself into an easy chair, fold my arms, and devote my whole soul to the contemplation of *love* and my *Olivia*.

LETTER XXV.

OLIVIA TO MRS. OSMOND.

South Audley-Street.

PREPARE yourself, my dearest Madam, for intelligence full of events. Be not alarmed; strange, very strange things have happened,

Y 2 delightful

delightful as unexpected. Your amiable daughter, and my most amiable friend, is no longer unacquainted with the honour you have conferred on your ever grateful *Olivia*. Your letters, of which she is the subject, have cost her a thousand tears; it is by her command I am now going to relate to you circumstantially all that has happened. You are the best, you will now be also the happiest of mothers. Lady *Morpeth* bids me speak of scenes which I should otherwise have passed over. If in obedience to her Ladyship's injunctions, I am obliged to give you a moment's pain, let it not afflict my revered Mrs. *Osmond*; but consider it as a prelude to the full accomplishment of all your most ardent wishes.

wishes. However appearances may at first increase your maternal apprehensions, dwell not, I beseech you, on appearances ; proceed to the discovery of those treasures in the Countess's heart, which will abundantly repay all your former anxieties.— Since my best, my beloved, my paternal friend, has been recalled to Heaven, since he has left the child of his bounty to struggle with misfortunes, my soul has been a stranger to joy—my happiness fled with him; but on this occasion, I feel the returning influence both of joy and happiness. Oh, Madam! how am I transported, to communicate tidings that will convey to your mind that calm tranquility which the poison

of suspicion has too long banished from thence. Whilst I am indulging my own emotions of gratitude, I forget that I am sporting too with your suspense, by withholding the very felicity I most impatiently long to impart. I see my error, and intreat your forgiveness. Within the last three weeks, I have observed an unusual air of thoughtfulness overspread the features of Lady *Morpeth*; she appeared less disposed for company, came often to my apartment, or sent for me to her own, where we have read together hours without interruption. She honoured me with directing the choice of our studies, listened with attention; and such passages as delight the judgment, or
touch

touch the passions, visibly affected her. I thought of you, my dear Mrs. *Osmond*; I was charmed at an alteration so flattering to your hopes.

Sometimes Lord *Morpeth* was admitted to our party, without any repugnance on the part of his Countess; on the contrary, I saw that she behaved to him with increasing regard. He beheld the change in his favour with rapture, and omitted nothing to convince her how very dear she was to his affections. The mode of her present amusements transported him; but he did not express his pleasure by words; it was shewn by the most flattering assiduities; he redoubled his attention to
improve

improve her taste for rational entertainments, and to make those flowers, which began to spring up in her mind, take root there, and blow habitually. What surprized me more than any other part of her conduct was, that, for several days, she ordered herself to be denied; and, when the servant asked if her Ladyship included Lady *Ann Fostess*, her reply was, I make no exceptions. This sudden revolution I was puzzled to account for. Why, Madam, should I conceal my thoughts from you? I have already disclosed them to the Countess, and she hears them without displeasure. Well then, dear Mrs. *Osmond*, I will tell you, that this coolness between such intimate friends

friends did not lull my apprehensions; they acquired new strength from a circumstance so very extraordinary. I saw Lady *Ann*'s dismissal in a light disadvantageous to both; the prudence of neither was raised in my opinion; you know my sentiments of Lady *Ann Fostess*, you know also the reasons you had given me to suppose Lady *Morpeth* improperly attached. Lord *Castledown* is frequently with both the ladies. There is no necessity for a further explanation; it accounts for my surmises. Last Tuesday as we were sitting quite alone, a loud knocking at the door occasioned Lady *Morpeth* to exclaim, *Olivia*, was ever any thing so unlucky? here is company coming, and I have
forgot

forgot to be denied; stay and receive them with me, and we will return to Sir *Roger de Coverly* and his widow, the moment we are at liberty.—I closed the book, begged her Ladyship would excuse my absence till her visitors had left her, and, with some difficulty, obtained her permission. I was going towards my own apartment, when the sound of feet on the stairs made me turn back to a small library, which, by a glass-door, communicates with her Ladyship's dressing-room. I entered from the anti-chamber; and, directed merely by chance, the green silk curtain being only half drawn, I could not avoid seeing and hearing all that passed within. I had taken down a
book,

book, from which my attention would not have wandered, but for the name of Lord *Castledown*, pronounced by your daughter in an accent that alarmed me. I turned my eye to that part of the door unconcealed by the curtain. For the first time I saw Lord *Castledown*; he had taken the Countess's hand;—my heart beat double;—she was disconcerted;—it was her embarrassed looks that distressed me. The graces of this young nobleman's person were too conspicuous to leave me quite easy for the consequences of a private interview; past circumstances, your apprehensions, all rushed upon my mind, and left me no time to deliberate.—The conversation grew interesting; I trem-

trembled for her peace and the peace of both families. Again, I was less disordered by observing, that he preserved an air of perfect respect, and appeared very sensible of the great impropriety he had committed; whilst she, after a moment's recollection, lost all her embarrassment, recovered her former composure, and supported in all respects the delicacy of a married character; but, from the first, I did not deliberate; I determined to interrupt the *tête-a-tête*. This, Madam, this interview with Lord *Castledown*, is the incident I wished to keep from your knowledge; but, as matters have since turned out, I obey the Countess with less reluctance, when she commands me

me not to withhold it ;—she says, if I do not relate every thing, it shall all come with aggravated severity from her own pen ; never, never more, added she, will I be guilty of concealment to the best of parents. Lord *Castledown*'s visit ended about an hour after I joined them ; and I saw with satisfaction, that my presence was not unwelcome to either. His Lordship had taken leave but a few minutes, when a sealed note was delivered to Lady *Morpeth*. Once more I harboured an idea injurious to her prudence ;—I could think of nothing but Lord *Castledown* ;—I watched her countenance ;—her eyes carelessly glanced over the suspected billet ;—in her eyes I read my mis-

take;—I paid the forfeit of a blush, and my suspicions vanished for ever. Having read the note, she put it into my hand, with a smile of gracious sweetness. Peruse, said she, this curious scrap, my dear *Olivia*, and see what a loss I have sustained; yet *you* owe the writer some acknowledgements; her treachery has taught me to be more sensible than I otherwise might have been of your valuable friendship. She gave me no time to reply, but left the room.—I was oppressed by a condescension, a tenderness so unexpected, and from that instant felt for her the affection of a sister.—Has not Providence blessed me, by assigning us one common mother? I have, all my life, expe-

experienced, that the ties of benevolence are not inferior to those of blood.—Whilst Lady *Morpeth* thought fit to keep me at that humble distance fortune had placed between us, I loved her only for the sake of my dear, dear Mrs. *Osmond*; she is now intitled to my love in a double degree. Oh! Madam, she is very, very amiable; nature has not been in fault; whenever her Ladyship has erred, prejudice of education must have occasioned her error; the innate principle of virtue has never deserted her bosom; it has remained steady and unshaken against the force of example, the attacks of fashion, the hurricane of dissipation. Again, I am transgressing on your

Z 2

patience;

patience; you have yet much to be informed of. I return to the billet left with me by Lady *Morpeth*, which I here transcribe.

B I L L E T.

“I have done myself the honour to leave my name so often at your Ladyship’s door, that I am really quite tired with dancing after you ;—I go out of town, to avoid the horrid mortification of meeting a person I once called my friend, but now find ~~her~~ soul is incapable of friendship. I have long observed your coolness, Madam, even before you thought proper to affront me openly. Some busy intermeddler, I suppose, has
stuffed

stuffed your head with nonsense;— you have very low connections, I always told you so; but you would not listen to my advice. I hate dependants that aspire to any title beyond a servant; nothing but mischief comes of admitting such creatures into one's family. Should you make a proper regulation in your domestic arrangement, in consequence of the hint I have given you, I am so steady, even to a degree of folly, in my friendship, that I cannot bid your Ladyship adieu in absolute anger. Dismiss your toad-eater, ^{and} convinced of the cruel injustice of your behaviour, and how impossible it is to find a friend so sincere as myself; then a letter will reach me

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at Lady *Hassard's*, and place you in the same warm corner of my heart which you once delighted to occupy.

“ANN FOSTESS.”

I took infinitely more notice of the formation of every letter in Lady *Ann's* note, than of the matter it contained. I drew from my pocket-book the blackest scrole that ever was produced by envy, art, or malevolence, and eagerly made a comparison. I was not wrong in my conjectures; the note to Lady *Morpeth*, and the anonymous caution levelled against her reputation, against your repose, against the honour of both families, were dictated by the same head,

head, proceeded from the same heart, and were written by the same hand; the likeness broke through all disguise; it broke so strongly, that ignorance itself could not have mistaken it. I had but just finished the examination, when Lady *Morpeth* returned. The anonymous letter I concealed; and giving her back Lady *Ann's* billet, with a smile, I said, notwithstanding the severity with which I have been treated, I can heartily forgive her Ladyship, both from disinclination to resentment, and because the injury she intended procures me the advantage of Lady *Morpeth's* friendship.—Then you think, *Olivia*, that she glanced at you in her illiberal reflections.—

It

It is impossible, Madam, to mistake the meaning of Lady *Ann*; she expresses herself too forcibly to have it misapprehended.—Well, you are a good soul, *Olivia*; if my esteem and friendship will be grateful to you, from this moment know yourself mistress of both. I have always loved you. The enemy who prevented me from giving you earlier proofs of my regard has lost her power; my own heart too is beginning to experience other sentiments from those it has hitherto entertained; it has been faulty, very faulty. A tear strayed down her cheek, and she sighed deeply. How affectingly interesting, Madam, was your charming daughter at this moment,—how bright was the

the dawning of those virtues which have every hour since been rising to meridian splendor! I did not try to hide the transports she excited; your idea was so connected with them, that by the inspiration of sympathy, you alone can judge of their excess. Truth carries conviction in the most trifling word, look, or action; Lady *Morpeth* saw my emotions proceeded from sincerity; and, however indifferently expressed, received them with the most distinguishing marks of favour. She folded me in her arms with the cordial embrace of tenderness, and from this blessed instant reserve was banished our society. Now is her whole soul opened to my view; and you will see it, as I did,
freed

freed from disguise;—if there was more shade than light in the picture she held up, how great are the allowances for the generous conviction with which she marks the former, the sweet modesty with which she conceals the latter; but how much greater are due on the score of her falling into improper hands, who, by attempting to polish nature, like an unskilful painter undertaking to mend a fine piece, obscures or defaces those delicate strokes which he has not taste to admire, scarcely understanding to distinguish.—I have been, said the charming Countess, since my earliest remembrance, blinded by custom, misled by appearances, and the dupe of fashion.

Lady

Lady *Castledown* took me from the protection of my parents, before their precepts had made the least impression on my infant mind. I never enquired minutely into their motives for parting with me; but suppose it was owing to the remarkable intimacy which I have heard subsisted between her family and that of my father's. She was a ward of my grandfather's, and brought up with my father from childhood. —Well, *Olivia*, under the auspices of this friend, the first lesson in which I was instructed taught me to think of my father and mother as people of an inferior station to that which her Ladyship's fond partiality had raised their daughter. My mother
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was particularly regarded by her as a mere plebeian, whilst her early knowledge of my father, and the obligations she owed my grandfather, gained him rather more distinction; he was mentioned as a man of fashion, who had forfeited his pretensions to gentility, by marrying beneath himself.

It pains me, dearest Madam, to employ my pen on a subject like this; yet in justice to Lady *Morpeth*, I dare not suppress the disagreeable circumstance, as it leads you the more easily to account for the adulteration of her innocent mind. By these repetitions, you will clearly distinguish the arts which estranged her affections.

ons. Your judgment will tell you how impossible it was for the seeds of filial duty, or, indeed, of any other virtue, to spring up in a soil and aspect so contrary to their nature.

A false odium can never hurt the person at whom it is levelled ;—the rank your father held—the fortune, the still more than fortune, the conspicuous merit, which, in giving you, he bestowed on Mr. *Osmond*, quiets my fears of offending, though all these considerations have not conquered my reluctance to repeat what the folly and vanity of another presumptuously suggested.—My infancy, continued Lady *Morpeth*, was passed in training me to make no

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despicable figure in the *beau monde*. All my studies, all my employments, were directed to that great end. Nothing was essential, nothing necessary, but what tended to the embellishing my person, or giving ease and grace to my manners. My natural genius leaned to satire; I lisped its language before I almost understood any other, and might have turned into ridicule every visitor who came to Lady *Castledown*, without receiving a frown or a check for my impertinence.— Lord *Castledown*, who was possessed of an infinity of good nature, and doated on me to extravagance, was so far from admiring this destructive talent, that he has often been displeased with me, when I have displayed

played it in his presence. I have known him to have frequent debates on this subject with his better half; she was indeed his *better half*; for he was only considered as *second* in his own family; consequently his rebukes were forgot by me in the hourly applauses I met with from his great commander;—such applauses could not fail to inspire me with fresh animation; and I never let go an opportunity, which I could possibly lay hold of, to exercise my mischievous humour.—Foibles of this kind were set down to the account of wit and vivacity; but, to hold down my head, miss a step in a minuet, or touch a false key on the harpsichord, were crimes for which I never escap'd

severe punishment, and at such times only I was reminded of my parents, by being threatened to be sent home to them. Frequent repetitions of this sort could not fail in their effect. I had been allowed to read the Fairy Tales in French, and out of those fables I first began to form comparisons. *Auberry-Grove* was the gloomy castle of despair; my father and mother, the terrible genii by which it was inhabited. *St. James's-Square* the palace of pleasure; and *Lady Castledown* the benevolent fairy who supplied all my wishes.——Whenever my banishment was but hinted, I doubled my diligence to get my sentence reversed; and, when it was judged proper for me to pay my parents

rents a visit of ceremony, nothing but her Ladyship's appointing the very day on which her woman should come to fetch me back, would have made me patiently submit to what I then thought the heaviest of all misfortunes.

I hope, *Olivia*, I am not ill-disposed by nature ; for, on these occasions, during the times I was at Auberry, my heart was sensible to the laudable indulgences I there experienced. — Alas ! whatever duty, whatever affection for my father and mother, whatever love for my sister, I used to carry with me to town, all was forgot before the season came round again for repeating my visit ;

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when I had always the same invincible aversion to conquer. Had half the pains been taken to improve my feelings, that were used to destroy them, I should not have laid up such a fund for regret as nothing will ever lessen, except I can convince my own family of a reformation in my sentiments, which, though perfectly sincere, is commenced at so late a date as can afford me but a distant prospect of being restored to their tenderness.—I was here going to interrupt her. It was difficult to confine the joy I felt;—my silence became a burthen;—but she would not permit me to break it.—Stop, dear *Olivia*, said she; you do not yet know how very ungrateful, how very undeserving

deserving I have been. Withhold the flattering comfort till you know me more thoroughly. If, after I have gone through the whole process of self-accusation, you can give me any consolation, it will be a cordial to support me in the perseverance of all my present good resolutions. I intreated her Ladyship to proceed, for that her happiness was now so dear to me, I suffered from my impatience to acquaint her with many circumstances which would convince her, she might build its foundation on as much certainty as depended on the fondest affection of her family to secure. My eye-lids grow heavy; they remind me how rapidly the night has flown away. I am fascinated

nated to my subject; but the weaknesses of nature are not to be resisted.

CONTINUATION.

Two hours' sleep brings me refreshed to join the thread of my narrative; and now, Madam, you will attend to Lady *Morpeth*.——

Before I was fourteen, a visiting day was fixed, on which I received my company in as much form and with as much ceremony as if I had been the established mistress of a family. My acquaintance were chosen from amongst the young nobility of my own age; but Lady *Ann Fosters* was the friend of my heart, selected in preference to many who courted my confidence.

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sole mistress of herself and fortune, at the age of eighteen; but this made no change in the steadiness of our romantic attachment. Vanity was the first passion with which I became acquainted; and every action of my life has, in a great measure, been governed by its influence. The companions with which I associated being all ladies of title, I could hardly pardon my father because he was not an Earl, to give me the same advantage; I have felt my face glow with vexation at being called *Miss Osmond*; the very sound of *Miss* grated on my ear; and, to avoid so odious an appellation, I requested my young friends, (confessing to them that the formality of *Miss Osmond* hurt

hurt me prodigiously) to call me *Emily*. I now see how much I degraded, instead of exalting myself, by this ridiculous pride; for, though they granted my request, I am sure they laughed at me for making it. This point gained—no longer *Miss Osmond*, but *Emily*; I industriously copied their mode, manners, and expressions; I was an adept in the science of fashion; I grew more satisfied, and was ennobled, at least in my own opinion.

I was sixteen when Lord *Havenbrook* returned from finishing his studies at Geneva: He was looked upon as the most accomplished young man of the age. You may have observed
that

that his person is not unobscured. She sighed—I blushed scarlet deep—Why did I blush? I have done with my fears on the account of Lady *Morpeth*. Oh, Madam! do not ask an explanation; what has since happened opens my eyes, and covers me with confusion!—I must guard my mind from the approach of romantic hopes too sanguine for admittance. I will try to forget my present feelings, and bring you back to Lady *Morpeth*.——She saw me blush, she saw me agitated, and said, smiling, I read your thoughts, my kind *Olivia*; but, when you have heard me out, you will be satisfied the sigh which escaped me, and cost you a blush, did not proceed from
any

any remaining partiality that I entertain for Lord *Castledown*; and yet I will own to you, it was himself who occasioned it, or rather the reflection of my own ingratitude;—I have used him sadly; but if he would give me leave to direct his choice, I think, *Olivia*, I could find out a method to make him ample amends for my ill-treatment.

You can be no stranger, continued she, to the flighty step I took previous to my marriage;—that step, *Olivia*, was not the consequence of violent love—no, my dear, I never have, nor ever desire, to experience that troublesome passion to excess. I preferred Lord *Castledown*

to all men, at the time he prevailed on me to go with him where our union might be completed, without meeting those obstructions which our design would most certainly have encountered at home. When I tell you I preferred him to all men, I have told you the most I ever felt in his favour; the prospect of a coronet thrown into the same scale, with this negative preference, made me not only deceive him, but even myself, with the appearance of a warmth, which, in reality, I was incapable of feeling. After being overtaken on our secret expedition, and brought back to St. James's-square, I was received in so cruel a manner by his mother,—I was sent from the

the family under such a cloud of disgrace,—that when Lord *Morpeth* renewed his addresses, which I had often refused with contempt, why, in a fit of anger and revenge, I thought I could not do better than accept his proposals. My condescension made him happy—he never once upbraided me with *Castledown*, but carried me quietly down to *Morpeth-Castle*. It was then that my dear excellent mother gave *you* to my friendship; she could not have bestowed you on me at a more unlucky season; for at that time, I was alive to no one sensation but vanity. I could not refuse you, but was insensible to the value of her present; I thought of nothing but

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making you useful in the management of my family, concluding, that your spirit must be humble as your apparent condition, but am happily disappointed.—Will you, *Olivia*, forgive my frankness? Will you not love me less for the declaration I am going to make;—I see by that affectionate smile you will not. Well then, I will venture to tell you, that I hated my kind *Olivia*, from no other reason than that she forced me to esteem her—forced me against my inclinations—against my determined resolutions to the contrary. You was long the subject of my letters to Lady *Ann Fosless*, who strengthened my resolves of keeping you at the distance
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of a mean dependant, placed by my mother to be her informer and the spy of my actions. I soon discovered how much I had mistaken your character, but was too proud to own my error.——Long before I left the castle, you gained ground considerably in my good opinion; but vanity, and its agent Lady *Ann*, still obliged me to persevere in my former indifference.

Now, tell me, my dear, can you generously forgive the almost unpardonable injustice I have done you? Can you condescend to accept the steady friendship I now offer you, with this assurance, that it ends only with my life. I shall not, Madam,

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interrupt this interesting period with my reply, I shall only tell you I kissed her hand with fervent gratitude, and that she proceeded.—The unexpected situation in which I found myself three months after my marriage disconcerted me beyond measure; you know the difficulty I had to prevail on my Lord to bring me to town; but you do not know that I was obliged to have recourse to arts, in order to accomplish my ends. I then submitted to them without reluctance; I now reflect on them with abhorrence. However, I was not deceived in their effects; and I wrote Lady *Ann Fostess* of my success.—I am no stranger, Madam, said I, to the trust you
reposed

reposed in her Ladyship; and I know too, how greatly she has abused your confidence.—She started, looked surprised, and begged I would explain my meaning; but at last yielded to my impatience, on a promise of satisfying her enquiries as soon as she had finished the subject she was then upon.—On the death of Lord *Castledown*, pursued she, Lady *Ann* wrote me, under the guise of friendship, a most insulting letter; nor did my answer want spirit, whilst I made use of the same mask which she had obligingly sent me as a pattern. On my arrival in town, our former intimacy revived; but not a day passed in which I did not make some new discovery of a false, flattering, selfish, dispo-

disposition. I compared it with that of my *Olivia*, and the comparison was horridly to Lady *Ann*'s disadvantage. As she lost her footing in my esteem, you was raised to it. You can form no idea of what I have suffered from her insolence, from her insulting cruelty.

The first time I met Lord *Castledown* (since my connection with Lord *Morpeth*) I could have seen him without pain; but she used me shockingly; she exulted; she directed her exultations to me with an intention to make me ridiculous in the eyes of some hundred spectators. My pride would not permit me to quarrel with her on this account; and without a
quarrel,

quarrel, there was no method of shaking her from my side. Wherever we afterwards happened to meet Lord *Castledown*, she played over the same card, and let slip no opportunity of endeavouring to torment me.—You may possibly have observed, that I have lately lived entirely at home, denied to all company. The truths are these: Your society was become valuable to me; and I would rather shut myself up for ever, than that my doors should be again opened to my greatest enemy. Hear and judge if I have given Lady *Ann Fosters* an epithet too severe. I went one morning to her house; she was gone abroad; I wanted to disengage myself from going with her that evening

evening to Soho, and went to her dressing-room. Paper and ink were laying on the table ; I sat down to scratch out an apology, when a letter, unfinished, caught my eye ; the words *that fool Lady Morpeth*, made me, without thinking it any breach of honour, satisfy my curiosity ; and the doubts I had long entertained of her treachery were by this accident confirmed. The shocking epistle was intended for Lady *Haffard*, a woman of a very exceptionable character ; and by these wretches, I found myself treated in the most barbarous manner. I flew from the house in an agony not to be described ; but I had put myself too much in her power to resent publickly the baseness

ness of her perfidy; and was forced silently to drop her acquaintance, without assigning any reason to her or to the world.—As soon as I had reached my own apartment, I shut myself up in it for three hours, in which time I took an impartial review of my actions from the first moment I could remember down to the present period. The retrospect was painful and tedious. I enquired of my heart, why it was painful, why tedious?—It informed me, the difficulties of which I complained proceeded from the ingratitude, from the unfeelingness, of my own disposition, which had not allowed one act of duty, love, or benevolence, to mark my conduct, and lighten the heavy catalogue of
vanity,

vanity, indiscretions, affectation, and deceit. One of my principal motives for accepting Lord *Morpeth* was, to revenge myself on Lady *Castledown*, by outvying her in taste, shew, magnificence; to take place of her; to retort on her, whenever occasion presented itself, the mortification, the bitter chagrin she heaped on me without mercy. I knew this revenge was to be accomplished by my having a more splendid equipage, finer jewels, and an older title than her own, or by any other trifles.—Yes, *Olivia*, I call them trifles; I have now had them long enough in my possession, to estimate them according to their *true* value; and am convinced there is as much satiety in grandeur as attends

attends our palate, or any other changeable inclination.—You may remember, *Olivia*, the day I was presented, I loaded my person with every ornament fine or becoming. I did not take all this pains to make a dazzling appearance at court, but for the superior gratification of paying my first visit to Lady *Castledown*. I practised a thousand airs, which I proposed to rehearse in her presence, till she was fully sensible of my importance, and of her own inferiority. I examined my dress and figure from top to toe, in my way to her Ladyship's apartment ;—approbation followed my partial glance, at every mirror I passed by, and I flashed upon her in all the lightning of my borrowed glory.

She took me in her arms; I saw her in the sable livery of affliction, thoughts of former kindneses, reverted instantly to my imagination, and my visit ended totally different from what I had intended. Out of all the many schemes for which I became a wife, I have now, *Olivia*, nothing left to engage my attention; in some I have been disappointed, of others I am tired; so I think, my dear, I seriously think, to set about performing such articles as, in my former plan, was not even suggested. As employments of the mind are new to me, they will afford variety, and, I am apt to believe, a great deal of comfort.—My parents, if they will condescend to overlook what has been

been faulty in my past conduct, shall now find a daughter diligently exact in her duty—Lady *Edgerton* an affectionate sister—and my *Olivia* too shall have her share in the distribution of my heart;—as to my little invisible, whose annunciation I received so ungraciously, it shall not want a mother, who will connect her own happiness with that of her infant.—And now, for my very good Lord, tho' last, not least—what shall I say of him?—His generous bearing and forbearing leaves me much his debtor;—I cannot repay him with that kind of fondness which nature forgot to mix in my composition;—honour, fidelity, and esteem, (if these will content him) I shall

appoint the substitutes of a more lively, yet less durable passion.— But, continued she, that I might be able to fulfil this last resolution, I require your assistance; and, as a prelude to which, it is absolutely necessary, that I should inform you of what passed this morning, between Lord *Castledown* and myself. As the delightful subject will admit of an interruption at this place, permit me to snatch the precious moment to congratulate the dear, deserving parents of this most amiable, most excellent woman, to tell them that, were all the riches of the earth poured into my lap, it could not communicate one sensation of joy like what I feel at seeing happiness restored to the

the families of *Osmond* and *Morpeth*. The Countess comes herself to fetch me down: She says she has company; she will not be refused.

CONTINUATION.

Oh, Madam! to whom did the Countess call me down?—it was to Lord *Castledown*! I have much to tell you of your highly-honoured *Olivia*; you shall have it all in my next; at present it would be presumption to call off your attention from a subject so much more material to your repose.

I return to my conversation with the Countess in her dressing-room.

You know, *Olivia*, continued she, how accidentally Lord *Castledown* dropped in, owing to my neglect in not giving the orders I intended, and which had been given many preceding mornings, to admit no company. I was not prepared for his visit. A consciousness of self-blame made me, for the first time, feel his presence;—it was weak, it was simple; but I could not help it. Now, I fear, *Olivia*, he may possibly mistake the emotions, which, in my present disposition, arose from the conviction of conscience for the result of remaining tenderness to him, nor is this all I have to fear. Satisfied of his honour, I did not see I was doing wrong when I indulged him
in

in a sort of conversation, which, on mature deliberation, I have not approved;—but this is not all neither. He asked me, he pressed me, to give him leave to join me at Soho next Thursday; it was the first request he has ever made me since, by my unprecedented ingratitude, I forfeited all pretensions to his friendship. It was in my power now to oblige him—to oblige him, by granting a favour, which, I thought, exceedingly trifling, and as innocent as it was unimportant.——My steady refusal for a long time, raised the value of my compliance, and I actually admired my own *finesse* in giving to a mere unmeaning civility, the air of a real obligation.

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When I left you reading Lady *Ann's* billet, I went to my own room; the *domino* I was to wear on Thursday hung on a chair; it brought to my recollection the promise I had made Lord *Castledown*, and at that moment I was forcibly struck with the impropriety, not to say the imprudence, of my engagement. What shall I do, *Olivia*? You must help me out of this entanglement. I would not have my fidelity to Lord *Morpeth* suspected. *Castledown* has been my acknowledged lover; to be seen talking with him *tête-a-tête*, and at a masquerade too!—I am hurt to death by the bare idea;—it must be avoided;—what otherwise will be the opinion even of Lord *Castledown* himself?

himself? The very *finesse* I used will turn to my disadvantage. Is it reasonable to suppose I should have made such a mighty fuss in complying with his request, if I had not entertained improper thoughts of its consequences. A woman who doubts her own strength should take care not to intrust the man she suspects of design with the secret of her weakness. My case is not in the least a similar one; yet it will have the appearance of being exactly the same. I would not offend by breaking my appointment—you must keep it for me, *Olivia*—you must meet and undeceive Lord *Castledown*.——I keep it for you, Madam!—I meet Lord *Castledown*!—Your Ladyship is jesting,

ing, surely—and I trembled from head to foot.—Indeed, my dear, I am not jesting—I was never more serious—don't be alarmed for damages; I promise to be responsible—the benefits shall be all your own—I am undone if you do not accept my agency.—Indeed, indeed, Lady *Morpeth*, I cannot; how can I accept it?—Pish! with all the ease in the world: but hear what I have further to say, and if you are not convinced how important, how very important your friendly offices will be to me in my perplexing dilemma; if you do not think you can undertake to perform them with honour, and with all personal security, I will pay your judgment that compliment you refuse

fuse to mine. I shall first recommend to your consideration, how seriously my reputation is concerned in divesting Lord *Castledown's* mind of impressions which he might presume to entertain, after the very silly condescensions I have this morning innocently made him. By me, *Olivia*, this mistake of mine cannot be removed; there is indelicacy in the very idea of beginning a conversation with him on the subject; but if you are not proof against my warmest intreaties, all may yet be settled easily enough, and very much to the credit of your friend. What I have to request is this: I shall make my apologies to Lord *Morpeth*, for not going to the masquerade; they will
readily

readily be admitted; for you know he is always in the fidgets, when my condition and the fatigues of dissipation are jumbled in the same idea. I shall desire he will attend you thither, and you must make no material objection. You are the greatest favourite he has in the world; he may be surprized at this proposal coming from me, but he will certainly be delighted at the office I assign him. Our height, air, and voice, are not so unlike, but, with a mask, we might be taken for each other;—it is what I wish particularly, that *Castledown* may fall into the deception. When you enter the rooms, take hold of your conductor's arm; it will carry on my scheme

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the better ; but, above all, remember, when Lord *Castledown* seeks to entertain you, do not shun his advances. He will, I make no doubt, take you for me ;—you shall wear the dress I should have worn. I hope he does not hold me so very cheap as to suppose I would consent to meet him on terms disadvantageous to my character ; but if my imprudence has given him room to form a thought so degrading, it is you who must undeceive him,—you must be the guardian of my honour ; to your protection I resign it ; defend it as you would your own ; say every thing for me that I ought to say, were I there in reality. Fear not a discovery. As I shall manage this affair, a

discovery is not to be apprehended ; I will take such measures with Lord *Morpeth*, who is always ready to humour my whimsical flights, that, without letting him into my design, he shall be an accomplice in its completion. I shall tell him it is my desire you might pass the whole evening, for his wife, to all my numerous acquaintance, that I might have the pleasure of laughing at their expence, whenever I think proper to undeceive them. He has, himself, often mistaken our voices; and when I am supposed to be actually amongst the croud, I can hardly think it possible that *Castledown* should detect the counterfeit;—my habit is a man's *domino*, and the difference with regard

gard to our size under such a dress will not be visible.—Dearest *Olivia*, (and she took my hand) can you reject my petition? Does your innocence start at a proposition so consistent with its own purity? Can it be directed to a better purpose than in preserving my reputation from the blight of aspersions, and establishing my repose?—But stop, I have not yet given you all my reasons, you shall know them all before you determine.

The agents of Lady *Ann Fosters* will greedily catch at a shadow of scandal, to stick it maliciously on my fame; now, it is not unlikely your conversation with Lord *Castledown*, under the suppositious character you

assume, will awaken all their malice; but, should it reach the ear of Lord *Morpeth*, which, I suppose, will be the case, then shall I have the glorious satisfaction to know that, in his opinion, I must stand fully acquitted. Now, *Olivia*, speak, for I have done.—There was so much refinement, so much judgment, so much discretion in her Ladyship's arguments, and she enforced them so effectually, that however averse I felt myself to engage in so adventurous an undertaking, she bore down all my scruples. Well, Madam, I resolved to try the experiment—to see, to speak to Lord *Castledown*, at the masquerade; and, if I found him an incroacher on the freedom
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of an interview Lady *Morpeth* had unthinkingly granted him, I determined also he should know the powers of her resentment; for, whilst he believed me to be the Countess, I should be able to express her sentiments, and at once put an end to his ungenerous pursuits. Lady *Morpeth's* acknowledgments for the slight service I had it in my power to render her pained a heart already oppressed by gratitude. To avoid *her* thanks, and give a turn to our subject, I asked if she had forgot the hint I had dropped some time before, regarding Lady *Ann Fostess*, and presented her the anonymous letter. She looked at the direction—*To Mrs. Osmond!*—to my mother, (with an air of astonishment)

nishment) what do I see? Am I in a dream? What correspondence has Lady *Ann Fostefs* with my mother? How, dear *Olivia*, came this letter in your possession? I am in agonies of suspense. I should not have given it to your Ladyship with so little caution, replied I; but the knowledge you have some days had of Lady *Ann's* disposition, I imagined, would prepare you for the greatest efforts that her inventive genius was capable of producing.—Whilst I spoke, her eyes were eagerly devouring the black contents. I watched every turn in her countenance, and saw it vary as her mind was agitated by rage, grief, or contempt—Having read it to an end, she threw
it

it on the ground, exclaiming, Oh, my mother! my dear mother! what must have been your sufferings?—My father too, *Olivia!*—my feelings of remorse are insupportable;—diabolical destroyer of my happiness! Yet thou stilest thyself the friend of my mother, a friend to the honour of her family. *Olivia*, had she exposed me to the whole world, besides sparing me this one cruel stroke, I could have borne it. Never, never can they forgive, never again receive their much-injured daughter, who, though innocent, yet in appearance is so very, very guilty—I cannot bear this: Oh, *Olivia!*—and she burst into tears.—I said every thing to calm her sorrows; I was not sparing
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of the cordial which your goodness had intrusted to my care; I administered your love, your forgiveness, in large portions, and by them soon saw Lady *Morpeth* restored in a great degree to her former composure.— She desired I would allow her to weep over those testimonies which I had received of your readiness to restore her to your maternal affections. I obeyed her commands; I delivered to her all your valuable letters; she did indeed weep over them; they were returned to me moistened with the dew of filial tenderness. I shall not enlarge on this grateful subject; your heart, Madam, will receive a fuller gratification from the letters Lady *Morpeth* dispatches to yourself
and

and Mrs. *Osmond*. My mind was so exceedingly unsettled, the day following those sudden revolutions, that in vain I attempted to transmit you the joyful intelligence with which my soul laboured. Thursday morning came; Thursday morning I was equally incapable; I took up the pen; a trembling seized me; my hand refused to guide it; I laid it aside. How I should best acquit myself in the important character which I was that evening to assume, occupied the whole space of my reflection; my head and heart would admit of no other idea. Every thing was conducted according to Lady *Morpeth's* plan. I was not discovered. Lord *Castledown* is the most honourable,

able, but the most dangerous of men. I dare not trust myself to write more—more might betray me from vanity to presumption ;—the partition is too thin for me to venture on the experiment. Do not misunderstand me, Madam ; to you I never can be guilty of concealment ; but, before I venture to lay open the new emotions I have lately experienced, I must humble my heart below the attacks of ambition.—I returned from the masquerade before three in the morning. Lady *Morpeth* was in bed, her Lord having insisted she should not stay up to expect our return ; so I retired to my chamber, and wrote the first part of this packet ; and I now close the whole,
that

that it may go by this post, to convey happiness to my ever dear, dear Mrs. *Osmond*.

END OF THE THIRD VOLUME.